

Presented in this book is the documentation
of the work produced during 1982-83 within
the Master of Fine Arts course at the Tasmanian
School of Art, University of Tasmania.

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BOOK NUMBER 2

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My interests are about the unreal world of fantasy, the romance of the past, the feminine viewpoint and the depiction of an environment made personal by the use of objects which hold a personal association for me.

Although my interests might change during the programme or expand or intensify in a specific way, the starting point for work will be those areas of interest outlined above.

My main method of working is in series form. Each image has a relationship to the others and is strengthened and intensified by this relationship. By using series I can create a story line which can be read, one image leading onto the next in a narrative/visual way or by a group of images creating a total image with cross-references. Some images have only hints of what is going on which encourages the viewer to interpret the works themselves.

I plan to use infra-red images because of their particular qualities which are suited to the works I am dealing with. The images process a slight distortion tonally and spatially and are enhanced by the graininess, softness and lack of contrast in the film.

I shall continue to explore the relationships between my objects and the space they are placed in. I am concerned with everything within the frame, the placement of objects, the environment and the symbolism created. For this reason I tend to work a lot with a contrived environment which allows me greater manipulation.

I plan to do a series of works using Kodalith film (large contact film). This film, because of its size, can be cut up, scratched and pieced or composed into an image which I can then expose on photographic paper or onto a sensitised paper. By using a sensitised paper (e.g. Cyanotype Van Dyke or Gum Bichromate), I can then paint or draw onto it, adding colour or marks. I have worked in this way before but printing onto photographic paper, which I feel would not be suitable for the images I want this time. Therefore, I would like to experiment

with this and the 'alternative processes' to create a series of images which perhaps I will put into a book or album form.

Ambiguity is an important factor in this work. I want the statements to remain mysterious, suggesting or hinting of human interaction using devices such as my own reflection or shadow anonymous female/male form, a hand only, or a blurred figure, a gesture.

INTRODUCTION

Having spent the past two years working fairly consistently I found I have worked along different paths than those originally intended. After a period of settling back into an institution and the course, and of gaining confidence in myself and my work, my interests changed. My dissatisfaction with the mechanical and precious nature of photography led to the use of a simpler camera, a greater manipulation of images and the introduction of materials other than mount board and frame for presentation. The most important area of experimentation was that of a more 3 dimensional use of the medium and presentation. All of these changes lead to a larger scale of working. These particular changes are documented later in more detail.

The alternative processes mentioned in my proposal were considered. I spent time working with them initially, however, I felt they were not suited to the images I was dealing with. I will probably return to these processes later but they were suited to bookform and space restrictions which eventually, I decided not to consider during the course.

The programme has provided a period of intense experimentation during which I resolved some problems and opened up new areas of research, all of which I will discuss in more detail.



Plate 1A

'Puppet Pieces'

size 111 x 87 cm

materials - steel rod frames - fabric, paint
and photographs.



Plage 1B

'Puppet Pieces'

size 111 x 87 cm

materials - steel rod frames - fabric, paint
and photographs

CHANGES AND REALIZATIONS IN WORK

A. Skills - Camera Craft

I had begun experimenting with infra-red film before I entered the course. The images were very grainy and soft in focus and were distorted both in terms of space and tone. These qualities were just what I wanted but I needed more contrast. I like dark images or images with large areas of black. In addition I wanted to be able to use a larger size negative. This combination of needs led to the use of box cameras which also had the advantage of very simple controls. Using these cameras also meant I could work inside in low lighting conditions again. One of the problems I had with infra-red was that it wasn't very effective when used inside.

The experimentation of camera related skills was new to me. Most of the manipulation I had done before was either in the darkroom when printing or in setting up the situation to be photographed. The short focal length of the box camera gave me very out-of-focus images. I had previously been working with images where the moving figure gave out-of-focus prints. This quality of distorted focus led to the use of a child's plastic camera which added to the distortion and also gave a strong grain pattern to the image. After working with these cameras for a time I returned to a standard 2½ camera. This was due to the unpracticable nature of the other cameras. I was able to mimic the qualities I appreciated in the plastic and the box cameras but with more control. However the distorted quality of the plastic camera was not obtainable.

B. Three Dimensional Form and Greater Manipulation of Images

Not long after entering the course I became disillusioned with certain aspects of photography and I wanted to work more sculpturally. (For three years of my B.F.A. course I worked in both sculpture and photography). So for a while I disregarded photography and began working with sketches and ideas of a sculptural nature. I then became interested in combining photography and sculpture. The two 'Puppet Pieces' (plate 1) came out of this time and are the only pieces that were actually made - a result of my renewed interest in photography. I regard this time as

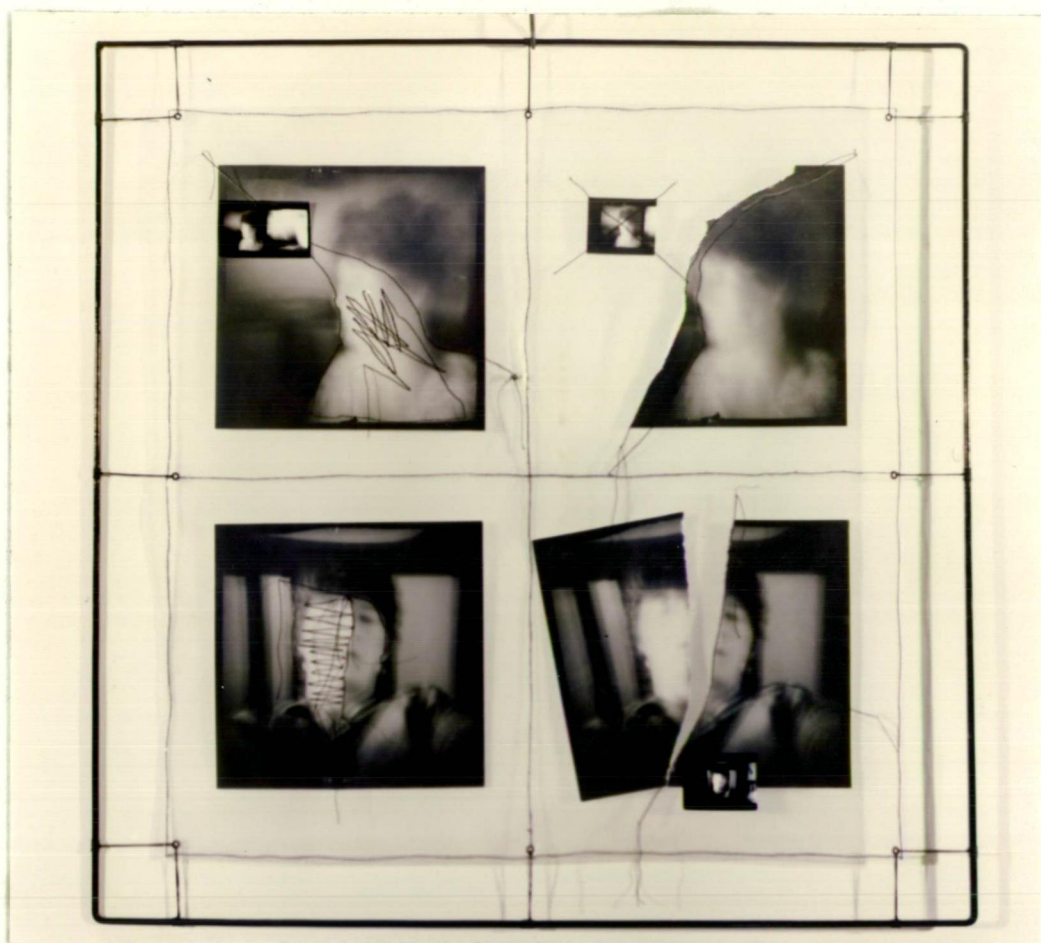


Plate 11

Plastic Piece 1

size 91.5 x 91.5

materials - steel rod frame, sewn plastic,

B/W photographs.

formative - I adopted a 3 dimensional approach to the presentation of images. The print became a starting point to be added to and worked on. It no longer stood on its own. Examples of this are Plastic Piece 1 (plate 11) and Plastic Piece 11 (plate 111), where the images are only a part of the pieces. In contrast the Portrait Piece 11 (plate 1V) is an image where the prints make the piece.

I feel that photography or images can be used in other ways besides mounting and framing. I have put images in plastic and sewn on them then attached them to metal frames with cotton. The introduction of other materials into my work, for example, felt fabric and sewn images has practical considerations. With the traditional approach, the amount of images put together is invariably determined by work space, mount board size, glass or perspex size, image size and one's own size. This way of presentation disregards all those considerations. All of these approaches to photography allow me greater manipulation and involvement with each piece.

C. Series Form and Scale

The combination of a group of images that is seen together forming a series is not new to my method of working. However the types of relationships between the images and the scale of working is. The majority of series that I had been working on before were images dealing with the same subject, usually taken in the same environment with the same lighting as in the case of the Body and Frame Piece (plate V); this piece consists of a large number of images assembled and framed to form a square shape. There was a consistency in subject and tonality and the positioning of the print. Where-as the Road Piece 1 (plate VI) is the end-product of putting seemingly unrelated images together to form a relationship, this piece is larger in scale and made up of images that appear to be placed in a random fashion. The images are of five different subjects which were taken in different lighting conditions and therefore are tonally different. This difference is the first problem, that is it doesn't have a consistency which helps the viewer to read the piece and put it together. I wanted to create a piece which makes the eyes move over the images in all directions, randomly and quickly, giving the effect of glimpses, of memories and dreams. However, I am aware of problems associated with this, such as the difficulty for the



Plate 111

Plastic Piece 11

size 105.5 x 61 cm

materials - steel rod frame, sewn plastic,
colour photographs, B/W photographs.

viewer in reading it as a whole piece and finding the reading disjointed. Another problem I had faced with the piece has been the scale. Working with over thirty images that are 12" x 12" in size is problematic in that ordering and deciding which images to use and in what order, becomes all but impossible to handle. Therefore the scale in which this is done is much smaller. What appears to work in the smaller scale doesn't necessarily work in the same way when the scale is increased. Therefore visualizing the finished size takes practice.

The scale change in my work was fairly gradual, the largest pieces were the last works I did. Previously my work was small in scale. The most satisfactory method of presentation of this work was in book form. The course expectation of an exhibition at the end of the two years changed my thinking and presentation. I had a studio to work in, available equipment and an exhibition space to work with at the end. This was conducive to experimentation on a larger scale and in a three dimensional way, all of which was not available so readily before. Not only was the image size larger but the type of image also changed. This change was in direct relationship to the scale. For example the personal aspect of a small image is suited to the intimate appraisal of book form. A larger print destroys that intimate relationship between viewer and image. It confronts the viewer and invades a larger area of space; one cannot turn the page to avoid it. I wanted to get away from the personal and intimate viewing of images. My images are still of a personal nature but I want them to confront the viewer, and cause the viewer to stand back.



Plate 1V

Portrait Piece 11

size - 9 images, each image 40.6 x 40.6 cm
materials - B/w photographs.

PROBLEMS AND PHILOSOPHY

A. Soft Focus - lack of focus

Viewers of photography tend to have a pre-conceived notion of 'good' photography. Photography is used widely by the professional, the amateur and the artist and by everybody as a consumer. The familiarity of the photograph has bred a contempt, and a particular set of expectations: colour is preferred to black and white, sharp focus to out-of-focus, technology is the 'creative' force, not the user. The expectations of these viewers (consumers of advertising, television and home snapshots, and often the informed audience) appears to center upon images that are sharp in focus which contain a good range of tones, recognizable subject matter, and no distortions. Anything which differs from this does not fall within the criteria of a 'good' photograph. The focus or lack of it is one of the major problems associated with viewing my work, but is also crucial to the aesthetic intent of the work. It is a device I have made to create ambiguity and atmosphere; it is a means of showing the emotive quality of the image instead of relying on the subject to do it by itself. The subject gives the viewer a description, but, by using soft focus the descriptive, quality of an image is impaired slightly, like images in a dream or memory. It invokes a sensation within the viewer without necessarily disclosing the full meaning of the image. It is a way of distancing the viewer. I have pushed the ambiguity in some pieces, perhaps a little too far, where the viewer cannot read the piece. This is a difficult problem; it is a question of finding the point before an image fades into ambiguity.

B. Using a Body - Sexuality

Another problem I've had to face is the mis-reading of images with an unclothed female body. I did the pieces unaware that particular references would be applied to the reading of them. After having researched and written my paper dealing with the depiction of the female body in an historical context I can see why such mis-readings occur.



Plate V - 'Body and Frame Piece'

size 111 x 93 cm.

materials - panel of 20 B/W

Photographs on felt

Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker have said in Old Mistresses, Women Art and Ideology:

"But what is the effect of these attempts to validate female experience, to reappropriate and valorize women's sexuality? Women, feminist or otherwise, may well feel affirmed by such work, recognizing the way it confronts their oppression by exposing hitherto hidden, repressed or censored aspects of their lives. But because meanings in art depend on how they are seen and from which ideological position they are received, such images have a very limited effectivity. They are easily retrieved and co-opted by a male culture because they do not rupture radically meanings and connotations of women in art as body, as sexual as nature, as object for male possession" 1

The body used was my own and because of this the accusation of narcissism reared its head. At the time of working out the pieces I had to make a decision about whose body to exploit. I thought it would create problems if I used my own body, although the pieces did not require it to be my own. I found some male viewers had difficulty in dealing with the sexuality of the pieces and tended to dismiss the work, making no attempt to read the image.

C. The Precious Nature of Photography

After having introduced other materials into my work I find there is conflict between my photographic training and my use of the medium for other ends. This duality of interests can be interpreted as a love/hate relationship with the preciousness of the photograph. By preciousness, I mean the print that is archivally printed with perfect tones and is the "art work" without any manipulation. I achieve satisfaction from such an image, a black and white print can be very seductive. But at the same time I find its mechanical nature limiting. With an image that is a starting point to be added to and worked on one loses that preciousness and achieves greater involvement, although I never totally disregard the photograph as the main concern, nor do I become a disciple of the medium. It has produced pieces which show both areas of thinking. The plastic sewn pieces, Plastic Piece 1 (plate 11) and Plastic Piece 11

1. Old Mistresses Women, Art and Ideology - Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock. Ratledge and Kegan Paul. 1991. P. 130

(plate 111) have images which are only a part of the total piece while the Portrait Piece 11 (plate 1V) is only photographs.



Plate V1

Road Piece 1

size - 33 images, each image is 30.5 x 30.5 cm

materials - B/W photographs

Introduction to the first and second essay.

The first essay is on the use of dance and related movements in Performance Art. My main concerns in this essay were related to the experience of the body in space. For example, the relationship of bodies to one another as in Stev Paxtons Contact Improvisation, that of Oskar Schlemmers 'felt space' and the behaviour demonstrations of Simone Forti.

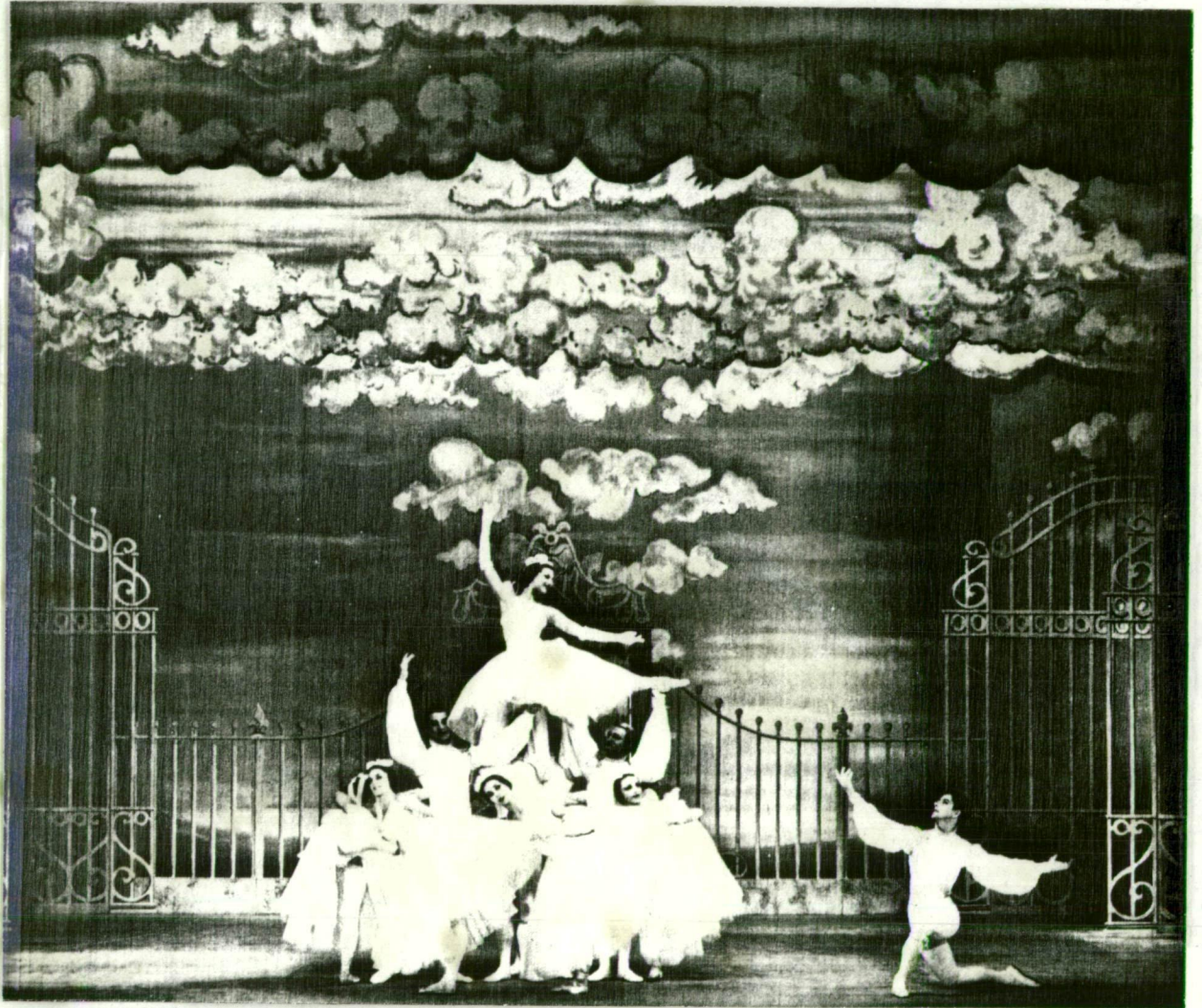
Some aspects of the performer's concerns can be related to my own practises in photography i.e. an on going concern of mine is the relationship of the body in space and/or to other objects. In framing an image my concerns are spatial, also my structuring within that frame is related to aspects of 'the new dance'. I am not concerned with the formal arrangement of a picture frame. The performers and choreographers avoid all classical aspects of the dance, such as style, costume, stage and formal placement. I found Trisha Browns use of the proscenium arch in Glacial Decoy relates to my own use of the camera frame. Brown uses the proscenium arch to fragment the dance, which is never fully visible. The arch cuts it up and gives the appearance of the dance being continued off stage and not contained within the frame. I use the camera's frame in a similar way giving the impression that part is missing or obscured from vision.

The second essay on the representation of women came about because of the controversy I faced dealing with three pieces Plastic Piece 1 (Plate 11), Plastic Piece 11 (plate 111) and The Body and Frame (plate V), as well as out of my own interest. I was aware of how I wanted the pieces to be read, but unaware of the misreadings that could and would be applied to them. The researching and execution of this essay helped me to understand and anticipate such response in future.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE BODY IN SPACE:

"Dance & Related Movements in Performance Art"

Dance exists in both time and space. Traditionally in western culture the space was determined by the stage frame which minimized the audience's perception of depth and allowed only a two dimensional view from one vantage point. The choreography for such a space was organized to traditional concepts of symmetry or carefully planned asymmetry, having a central focus. The finished piece was the most important consideration



Dancers and choreographers began to shift their attention from these conventions by experimenting with various ideas and processes. In the early fifties Merce Cunningham began to shift the attention from the finished dance to the process, by creating dance movements by chance methods. He also changed the spatial conventions of the stage by occupying the whole of the stage and scattering his movement episodes over its surface. Other performers and choreographers began to question more of the conventions. The stage became a spatial restriction which

led performers to seek alternative space. Other elements of dance were also rejected. The use of costumes, a story line, the star person and the theatrical quality were no longer considered. Each dancer that I will talk about in this essay has experimented in different ways with the body moving in space.

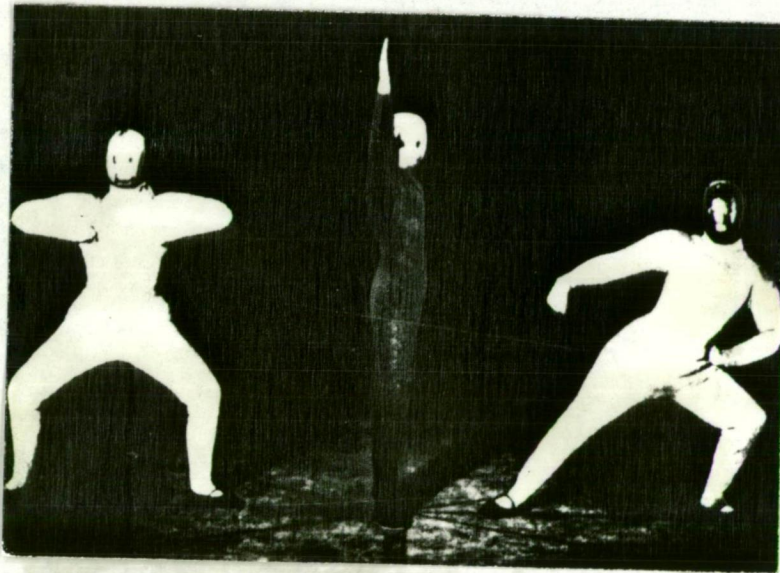
"Their common aim was the establishment of a radically new economy of movement. This required a systematic critique of the rhetoric, conventions, the esthetic hierarchies imposed by traditional or classical dance forms. That rhetoric was, in fact, reversed, destroyed in what came to be known as the dance of 'ordinary language' and of 'task performance.'" ¹

1. "Yvonne Rainer, Part One: 'The Dancer and the Dance.'" Annette Michelson. Art Forum. Jan. 1974. P. 58.

Oskar Schlemmer - The Experience of Space.

Man is always at the center of Schlemmer's stage. With pantomimic and dancing movements he experiences both himself and the space he moves in. Schlemmer's choreography is visually conceived, it designs "space plans" (alluding to a word coined by his predecessor) and is thereby closer to being architectonic than any other of its kind.

"What is particularly original in Schlemmer's conception is the integration of the moving body, unfolding in dance and architecture as a space phenomenon" ²



Oskar Schlemmer

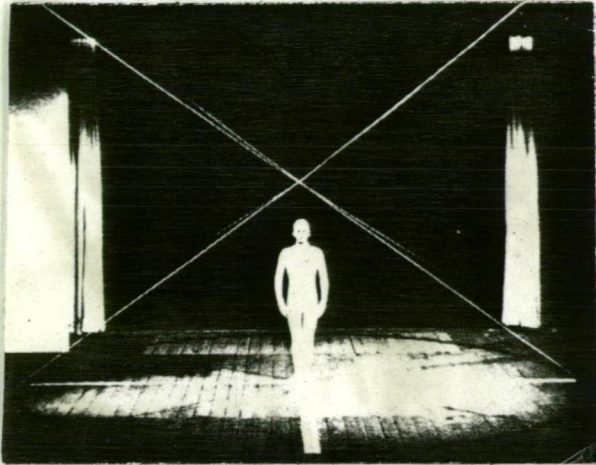
Space Dance 1925-27

(danced and performed by Schlemmer, Siedhoff and Kaminsky)

Schlemmer was a painter and director of the Bauhaus Stage in the 1920's. Through his theories about space and dance, and his performances, he has established himself as a fore-runner of many of the concerns of the performers in the sixties and even today. He developed gestures and

2. The Bauhaus Hans. M. Wingler. P. 361.

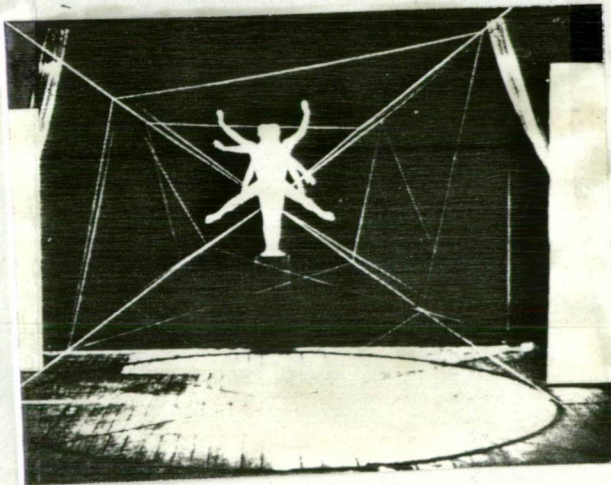
movements which were the result of 'Felt Volume'. That is, dances that arise from the space and the 'sensations of space'. In his paper the Mathematics of the Dance he explains this theory 'Space, when taken as determining the laws for everything that happens within its limits, also determines the gestures of the dancer within that space. Out of plane geometry, out of the pursuit of the straight line, the diagonal, the circle, and the curve, a stereometry of space evolves, almost of itself, by the moving vertical line of the dancing figure."³ This theory was also demonstrated by Schlemmer.



Oskar Schlemmer

Figure in Space with Plane
Geometry and Spatial
Delinations 1927.

(performed by Werner Siedhoff).



Oskar Schlemmer

Dance in Space
(Delineation of Space with
Figure) 1927.

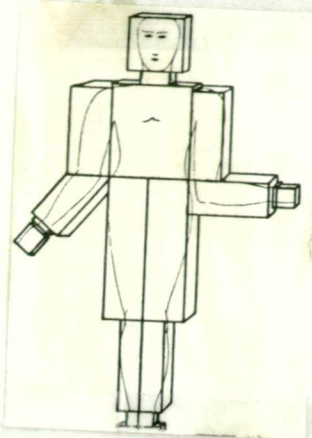
(multiple exposure photography
by Lux Feininger).

" First the square surface of the floor was divided into bisecting axes and diagonals, completed by a circle. The taut wires crossed the empty stage, defining the 'volume' or cubit dimension of the space. Following these guidelines the dancers moved within the 'spatial linear web' their movement dictated by the already geometrically divided stage."⁴

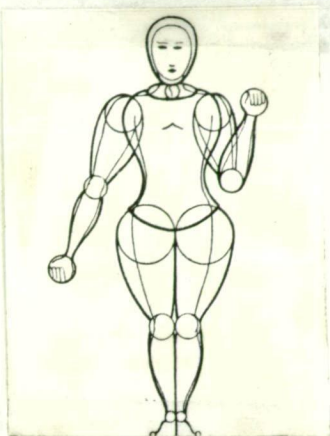
3. Mathematics of the Dance - Journal Vivos Voco. Vol. V. No 8/9 August-September, 1926.

4. Performance - Live Art 1909 to the Present. Roselee Goldberg. P. 68.

Schlemmer wished to emphasize the human figure as an event, thus he devised costumes which determined the type of movement the dancer could do. (These drawings are from "Man and Artistic Figure".



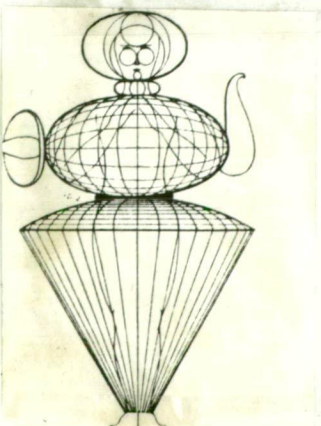
48. "For the mutation of the human body in the sense of the stage costume, the following can be fundamentally decisive. The law of the surrounding cubistic forms; here the cubic forms are transferred to the human body forms; head torso, arms, legs are changed into spatial - cubistic entities. Result: Living architecture."



49. "The functional laws of the human body in relation to space: these typify the body forms: the oval head, the base form of the torso, the club forms of the arms and legs, the spherical form of the joints. Result: A technical organism."



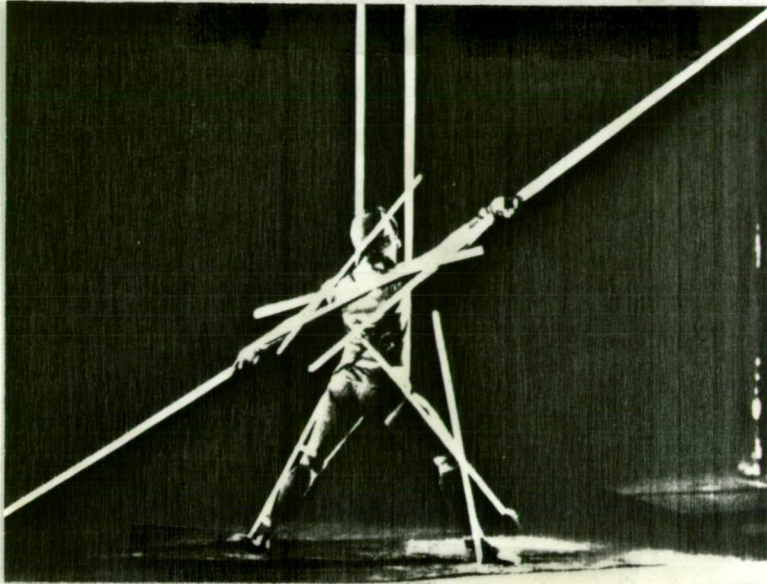
50. "The laws of motion of the human body in space; here they are the forms of rotation, direction, section of space; cone, helix, spiral, disk. Result: A technical organism."



51. "The metaphysical forms of expression symbolizing the members of the human body: the star form of the spread hand, the x of the crossed arms, the cruciform of the spine and shoulder: also double head, multiple limbs, division and neutralization of forms Result: Dematerialization."

"The body itself can demonstrate its mathematics by setting free its bodily mechanics. Aides such as poles (the horizontal balancing-pole) or stilts (vertical elements are as 'extension poles of the tools of movement' capable of vivifying space in framelike, linear fashion."⁵

The Slot Dance 1927 is a good example. The body movements are determined by the 8 foot slots projecting from the limb of the dancer.

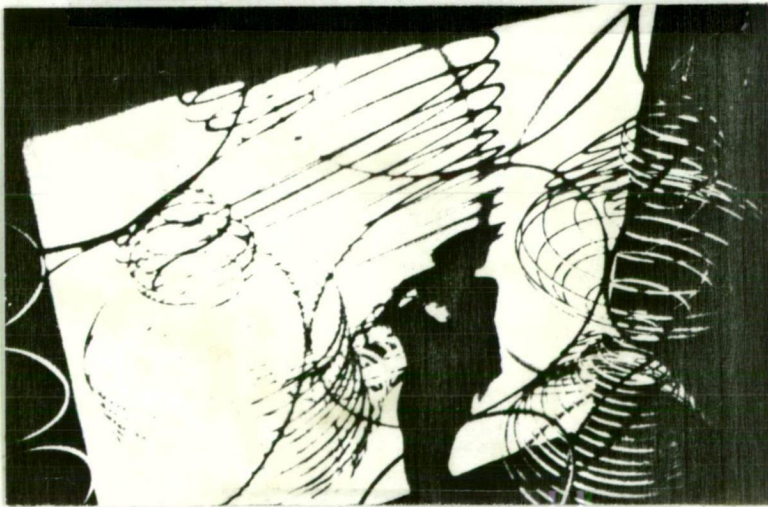


Oskar Schlemmer

'Dance of Slats' 1927

performed by Manda von Kreibitz

"The figure, performing in semi darkness, outlined the geometrical division of the space and emphasizing the perspective view for the audience". (sic)⁶



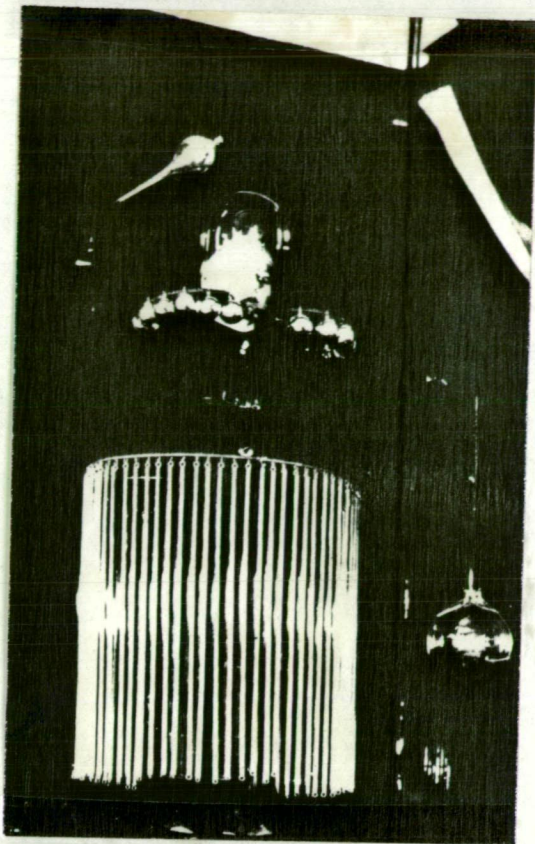
Oskar Schlemmer P. 70.

'Dance of Hoods' 1927.

The shadow effect is achieved by multiple exposure - photograph taken by Albert Braum.

5. P.118. The Bauhaus - Hans M. Wingler.

6. Roselee Goldberg. P. 70.



Oskar Schlemmer.

'Glass Dance' 1929.

performed by Carla Grooch.

The costume consisted of a
hooped skirt of glass rods, the
head covered by a glass globe,
and carrying glass spheres.

During the sixties much performance work was a rejection of all that was to do with theatrical movement and practise. This period was a linking of other areas of the arts and visual arts together. The coming together of dancers, musicians and artists led to collaboration on many levels and helped shape the 'New Dance'. Some of those involved are Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forti (Whitman), Trisha Brown and Steve Paxton.

"They rejected the formal articulation of conventional dance which isolates body parts into appendages of arms, legs and then facial expression and symbolic gestures."⁷
I will take up these views when dealing with each individual performer.

7. Space as Praxis - Roselee Goldberg.
Studio International P. 130 Sept/Oct. 1975. Vol. 190.

Steve Paxton - Improvisation

Paxton was probably the most radical of the new dancers, he rejected not only the stage space but also the premise that only trained dancers were needed. He evolved the idea of performance by non-performers. He designed pieces which called for little rehearsal and minimum of rules used by a group assembled for the moment of performance. Improvisation or acceptance of any kind of movement was an important part of his work. He wanted to find a new way of dancing and a new way of structuring dance. The following images are from a piece performed at The Kitchen. N.Y. 1975.

The performance is Contact Improvisation



"Something that I (Steve Paxton) scored for the Grand Union led to Contact Improvisation. It was a solo on a mat that started off low, rolling and stretching through the legs, and ended up high, with leaping rolls and catches....."



"Basically it was an investigation of the body in space where the feet didn't have to be on the ground....."



It was the place where I went through the basic perceptual stuff, peripheral vision, horizon change, the kind of sketching that makes rolling and falling easy.....



The world just goes whirling around your eyes, and you have to find other sources of stability - momentum and sense of gravity are the major ones.



There's one level on which the performers shouldn't be aware of what they're doing: it's not about directing each other's movement..... its more about falling in space together and improvising freely - otherwise they're manipulating each other....."



There is an 'it' we're trying to communicate.....trying to establish a very finely turned form of interaction through touch - you have to relate through the skin first, instead of through the eyes.....



The more contact is achieved through different parts of the body, the better.....There's a certain sense of eye that has to be completely abdicated.....



Contact can be viewed as two bodies coming together so that it's really one body with two sets of motives.....

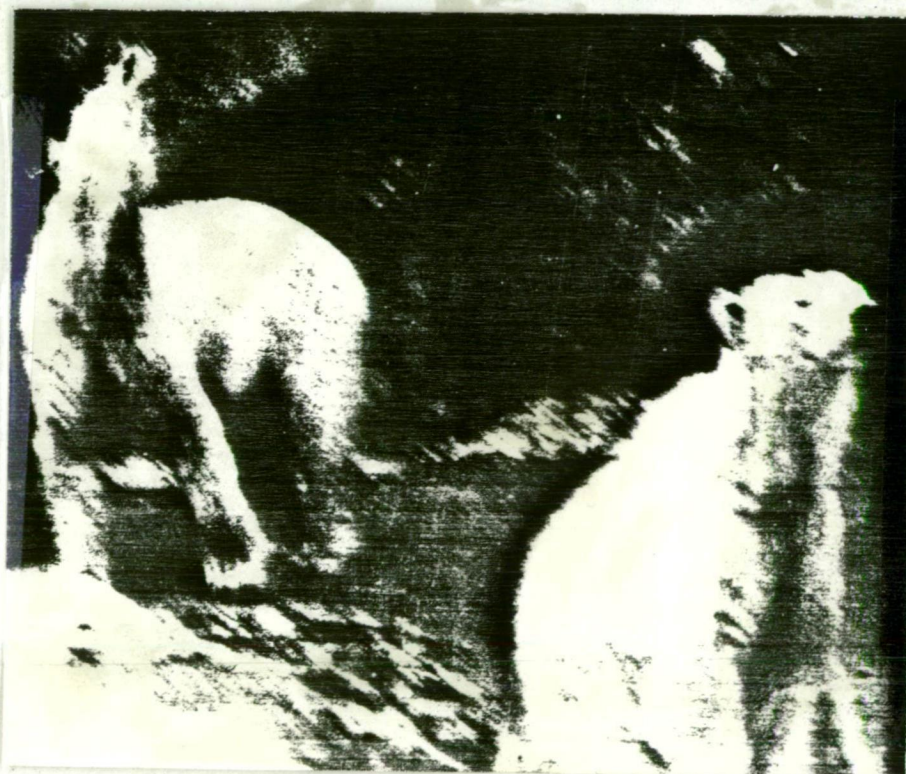


Photos: Gwenn Thomas.

'Contact Improvisation' Avalanche. Summer 1975.

Simone Forti - behavioural demonstrations

Forti was another dancer who came into prominence in the sixties. She replaced theatrical movement, space and practice with a type of dance performance directed toward task fulfillment and simple repetitive activity. Much of her work has been to do with behaviour demonstrations; where she selects something from the environment and observes its movements and behaviour. Then she tries to imitate a particular element from the movements. "The basic elements I've been working with for the last few years are balance and momentum and their relationships."⁸ Forti had been observing the behavioural patterns of caged animals. "It seems in captivity there comes about a separation of aspects of self. One aspect remains intact. But the aspect of being part of a system is drastically changed. Even the built-in relationship



between the animal's nose and feet can no longer play itself out. And this separation of a sense of wholeness from the being as it operates in its life system somehow brings the captive animal's dance behaviour into particular relief."⁹

8. Simone Forti....Dancing at the Fence"
Avalanche Dec. 1974. P. 20.

9. Simone Forti. P. 20.



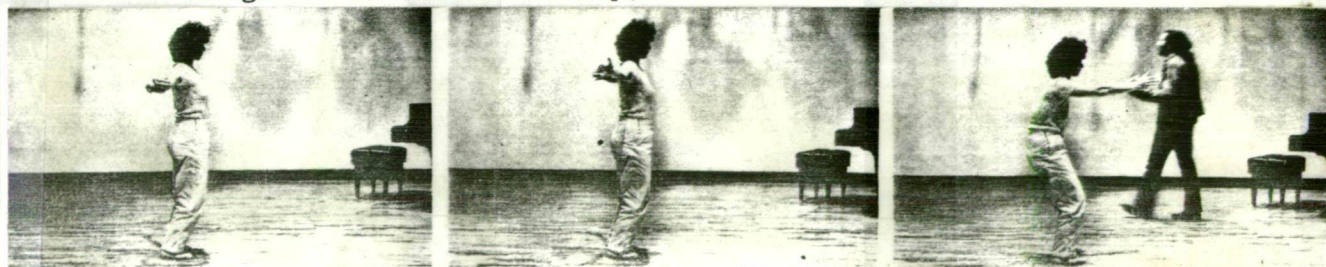
"Some animals are corner walkers,



thrum, thrum, thrum. Then if you put



something to break the corner up, sometimes



they do a triangle, and that's boredom."

Simone Forti.

Work Session. Spring 1973. (with Charlemagne Palestine singing).

Photos: Alvin Comiter.

"I once observed the pacing patterns of a female bear. She was the smaller of two, in an open area with a little cave back at the deep end. She was engaged in a kind of promenade with certain paths which she would nearly always walk in the same sequence, stopping and turning at certain landmarks on the way. She would walk into the little cave and then back out, swinging her head to clear the entrance. Sometimes she would start out on her walk around the space. First along a rather narrow ledge at the end

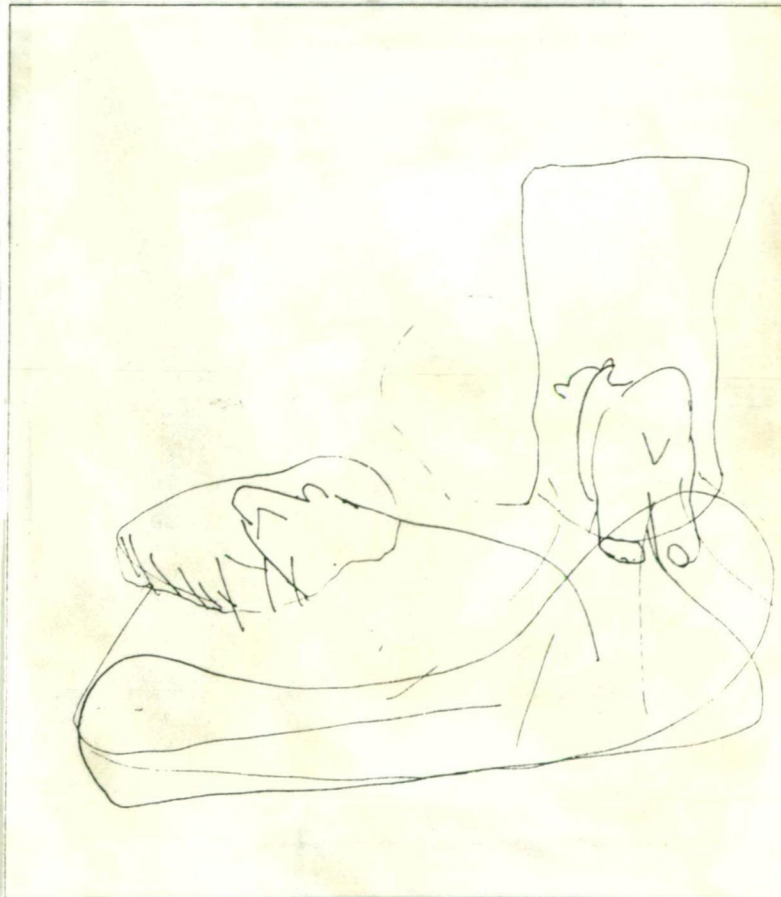
limited space...

motion of

clearing

to Turn

of which was a big rock nearly obstructing the passage. The bear would nearly always stop there and turn around by swinging her head over or under, or occasionally clearing the rock ass-side. At each stopping point she would make a choice between her various ways of turning. But from time to time she would bypass her mark, gazing around as she paced out one of the less frequent loops in her pattern. It struck me that she had been able to regularize a matrix out of which she could improvise variations." ¹⁰



Yvonne Rainer - body as object

Rainer is a choreographer/performer who began working in the late fifties. She rejected the dramatic restrictions of traditional dance and compiled a list in 1963 of the things she did not want in her work. "No to spectacle, no to virtuosity, no to transformation and magic and make-believe, no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image, no to the heroic, no to the anti-hero, no to trash imagery, no to involvement of performer or spectator, no to style, no to camp, no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer, no to eccentricity, no to moving or being moved." ¹¹

Her desire was to produce a new form of dance based on 'ordinary language' and of 'task performance'. That is "a refusal to project a persona, but thinking of oneself in dancing as simply a neutral surveyor of information." ¹²

Her overall concern was "to weigh the quality of the human body toward that of objects, away from the superstylization of the dancer." ¹³

An example of this is a piece called Parts of Some Sextets 1965. All these pieces involved not only permutations of movement, sound and action but also an exploration of the human body in relation to objects. Thus defining its space.

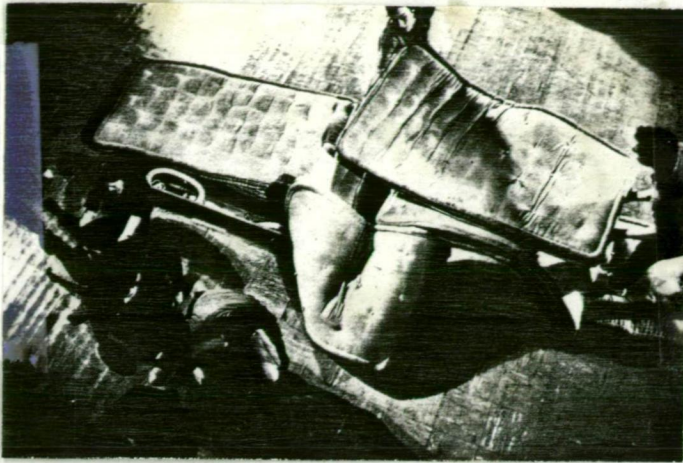


Yvonne Rainer
Parts of Some
Sextets. 1963

A piece for 10
people and 12
mattresses.

11. "Post Judson Dance", Deborah Jowitt. Art in America. 59 1971
P. 81.

12. & 13. "Yvonne Rainer" Avalanche. Summer 1970. P. 50.



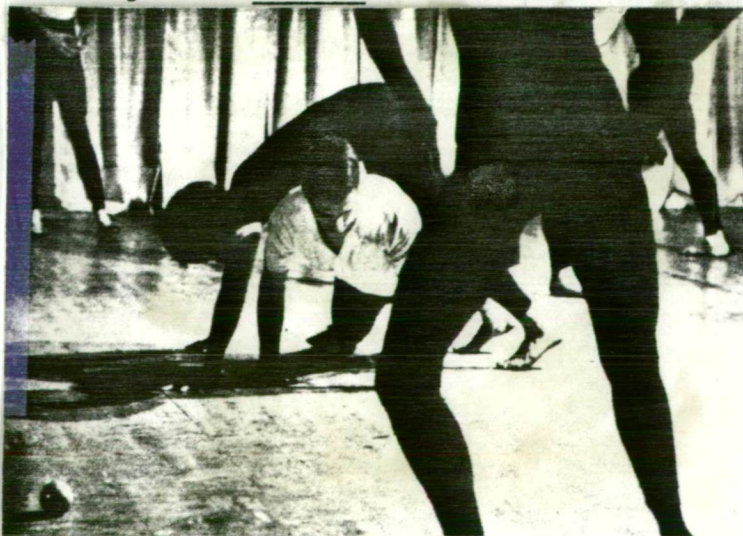
Parts of Some
Sextets. 1963



Parts of Some Sextets 1963.

In this piece Rainer used taped readings from the Diary of William Bentley P.P. He was a late 18th century Massachusetts minister.

Another piece of Rainer's which deals with movement as task or movement as object is Terrain 1963.



Yvonne Rainer
Terrain. 1963.

Rainer's directions to the dancers were 'walk, run, crawl - straight legs..... straight-leg waddle - arms high doing small windmillmovie death run (Breathless)catch-one squats while other pretends to throw ball-sharp jerky movements - running back and forth passing ball.'" ¹⁴ These words are only part of the instructions from the five part work.

The works I have talked about are early works of Rainer's. However, her later work is more concerned with personal material and the use of dialogue. "the fascination with verbal material is opposed to her fascination with objects and non-verbal behaviour; her interest in personal material is balanced by her attention to formal concerns; her awareness of process coexists with an interest in structure." ¹⁵

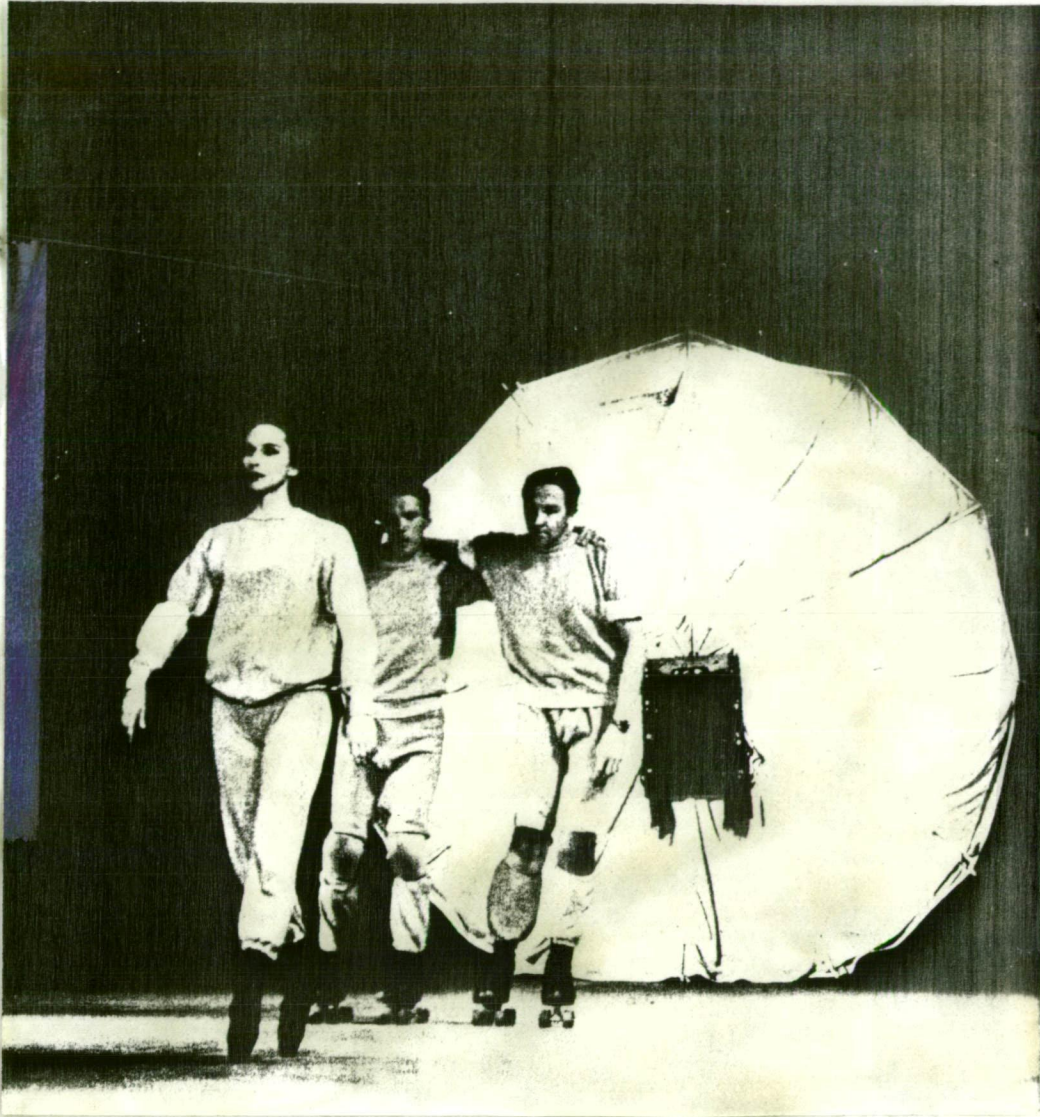
Robert Rauschenberg - Motion

Rauschenberg played a role in the shaping of the 'New Dance' of the sixties. His involvement with dancers like Merce Cunningham had originally been in the areas of designing sets and costumes for Merce Cunningham Company and some performing. In 1963 he presented his performance called Pelican 1963.

In this piece Rauschenberg is examining motion and its presentation in various ways.

14. "Yvonne Rainer: Holding a Mirror to Experience"
Studio International 1973. P. 41

15. Yvonne Rainer: Holding a Mirror to Experience. P. 43



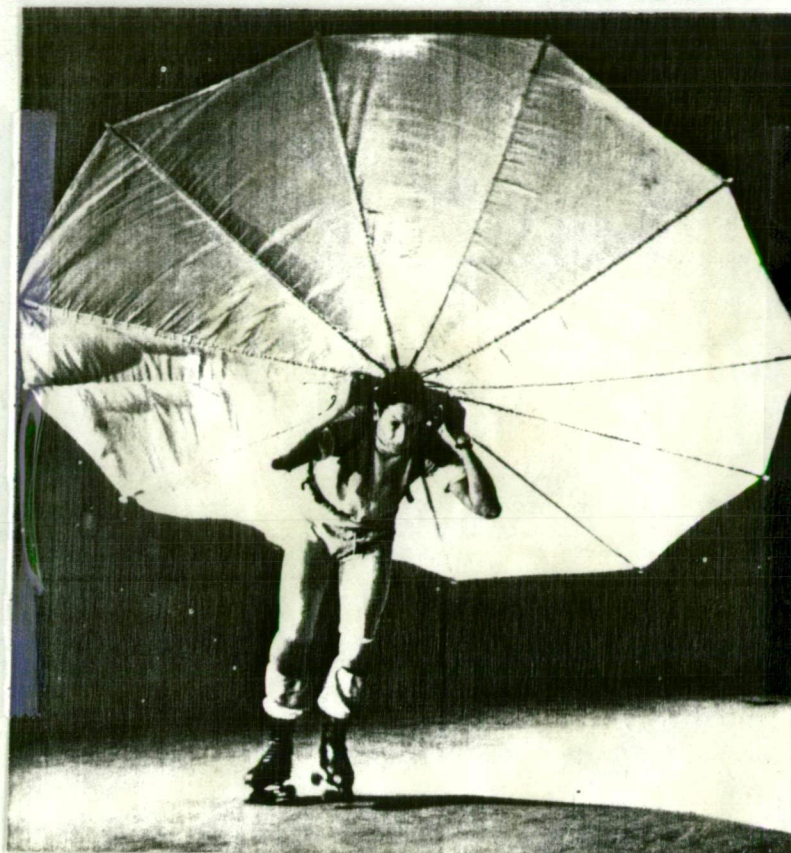
Robert Rauschenberg

Pelican 1963 (performers - Rauschenberg,

Trisha Brown and Alex Hay.)

The venue was an ice skating rink with two of the performers on ice skates with Brown on points. The two skaters glided at speed around the dancer, who is executing a series of movements slowly. The skaters open up their parachutes which slowed down their movements. At the same time the dancer speeds up. "There the element of place, as well as objects such as parachutes, ballet shoes and roller skates, determined the nature of the performance."¹⁶

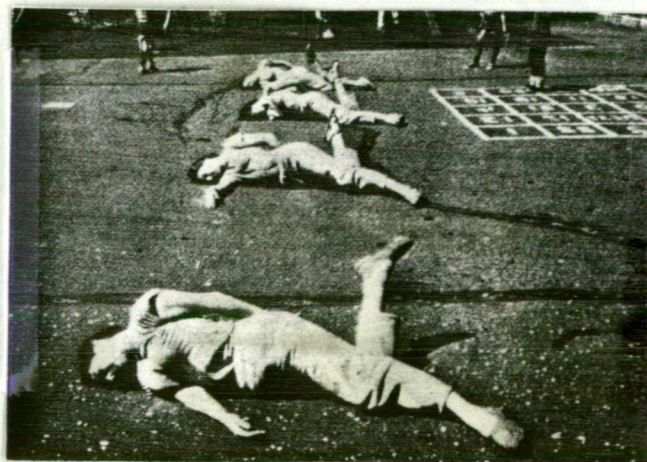
16. Performance - Live Art 1909 to the Present. Roselee Goldberg
P. 87.



Pelican 1963

Trisha Brown - Space and Gravity

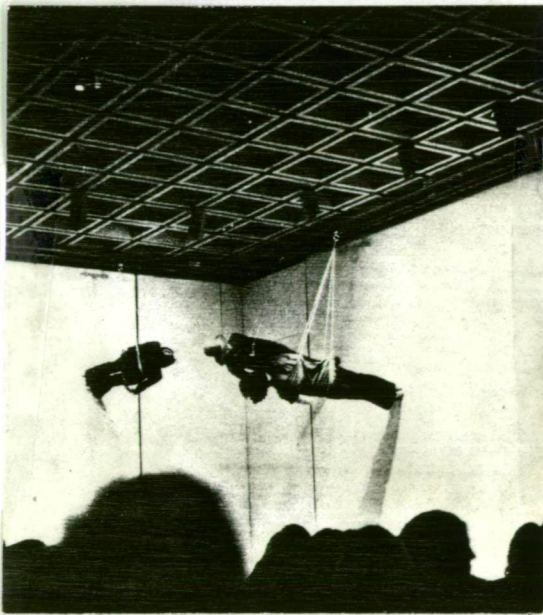
Brown's earlier work deals with spatial experience. She uses existing obstacles (like buildings and walls) in which to experience spatial disorientation with physical effort. These pieces were designed to disorientate the audience's perception of space and gravity. For example Rituals on Concrete and Air 1973.



Trisha Brown
Rituals on Concrete
and Air. 1973

"Articulating the body on the floor eliminated problems of balance, tension, gravity and pull which occur when working vertically in space and also allows for quite different figurations."¹⁷

Brown began working with tackle systems that allowed her to walk on walls, and mountain climbing equipment for walking down 7 story buildings. These pieces she called 'Equipment Pieces'. One of these pieces called 'Walking on the Wall' 1971 was performed in a gallery where the performers used mountaineering equipment and walked along the wall at right angles to the audience.



Trisha Brown

Walking on the Wall 1971.

"The audience would virtually swing back on their chairs in an attempt to view the dance sideways on, rather than from the top as they were obliged to do."¹⁸

Brown later returned to a more conventional mode of theatrical presentation. She felt she had done all that she wanted to do with gravity and space. "I'd been going along heavily burdened with my enormous props and constructions, and I dumped them. They were a burden in a million ways. In terms of safety to the performer and the audience... There was storage. There was carrying them into the theatre and installing them. There was the cost."¹⁹

17. "Space as Praxis" Roselee Goldberg.
Studio International Sep./Oct. 1975. Vol. 190. P 134.

18. "Space as Praxis" Roselee Goldberg. P. 134.

19. "Performance and Conversation" Stephen Koch.
Art Forum Sept-Dec. 1972.

Glacial Decoy 1979 was made specifically for the traditional proscenium arch or stage frame and is danced about the frame. This piece marks the introduction of sets and costumes (by Rauschenberg) into her work.



Glacial Decoy 1979

Performers - Trisha Brown, Nina Lundborg and Lisa Kraus.

"The main agent of the structural fragmentation is the frame imposed upon the dance by the proscenium arch. In the opening sequence, for example, only the peripheries of the stage are used: one at a time, soloists emerge in mid-phrase from opposite sides of the stage, only to disappear back into the wings before the phrase can be completed. This alternating pattern of lateral movement and the play of appearance and disappearance it inaugurates, suggests that the dance is not contained by the proscenium but continues off-stage or, rather, that it might continue were it not interrupted by the frame. By incorporating the proscenium in this way, Brown has successfully subverted its pictorializing function - its tendency to present what it frames as integral, complete, self-sufficient but only by delimiting, restricting, confining it."²⁰

20. The Pro-scenic Event. Art in America. Dec. 1981. P. 128.

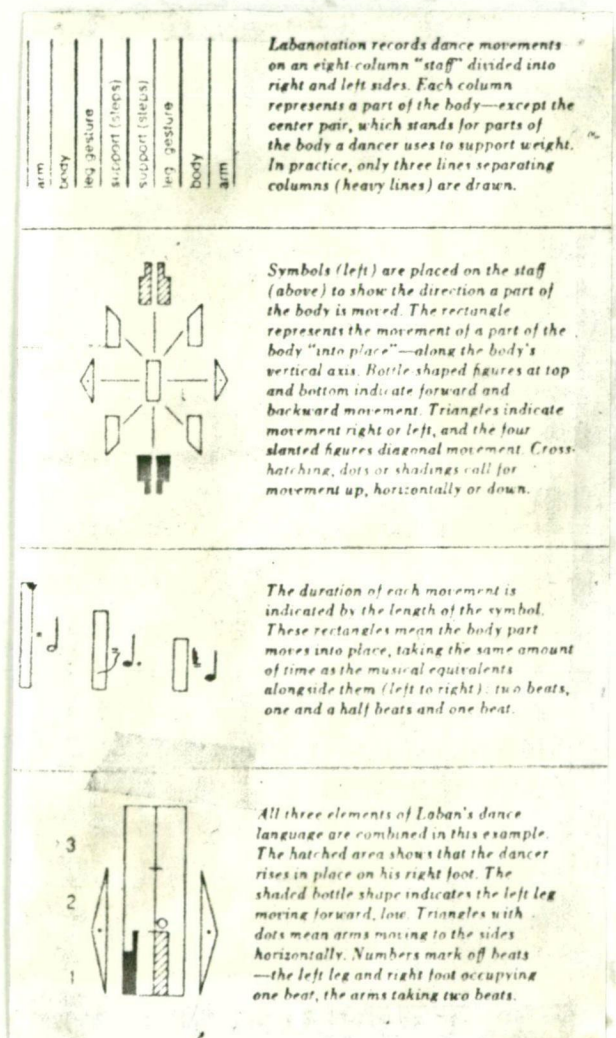
The sets and costumes also add to the ideas of fragmentation, and events happening beyond vision.

PART B

This section of the essay is a result of my interest, while researching this essay, in aspects of recording 'the dance'. That is, the recording of the movement, gesture, space and the body within that space onto a two dimensional form. Each choreographer has his/her own form of dance rotation.

Throughout the history of dance, notes and diagrams have been made of works either before or after the piece has been performed. This rotation of movement by choreographers and dancers provides a means for planning and recording and also a method of documenting movement through space on two dimensional face.

Rudolph Laban (a choreographer and theorist) formulated a complex key for all movement analysis in the twenties. He interpreted the body as an instrument, "nothing else than a complicated system of cranes and levers of various extensions."²¹

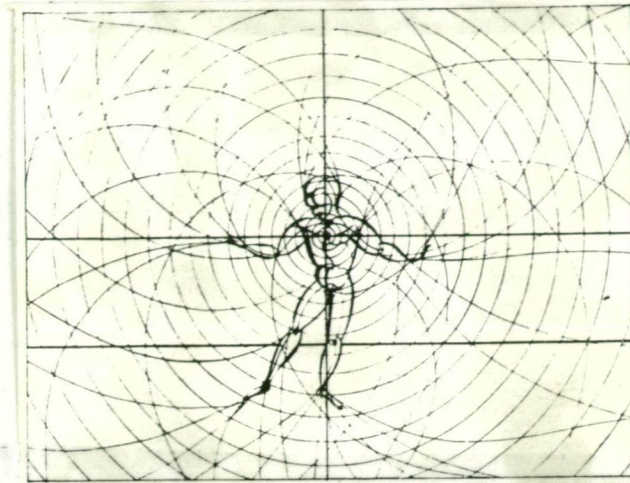


LABANOTATION

21. Performance: The Art of Notation. Roselee Goldberg. Studio International August 1976. P. 55

Labans theories were reflected in the work of Oskar Schlemmer. Schlemmer provided a theory and name for tracks written in the air by dance movement. He called it the stereometry of space.

"If one were to imagine a space filled with a soft, pliable substance in which the figures of the sequence of the dancer's movement were to harden as a negative form, this would demonstrate the relationship of the geometry of the plane to the stereometry of the space."²²



Oskar Schlemmer

'Stereometry of Space'

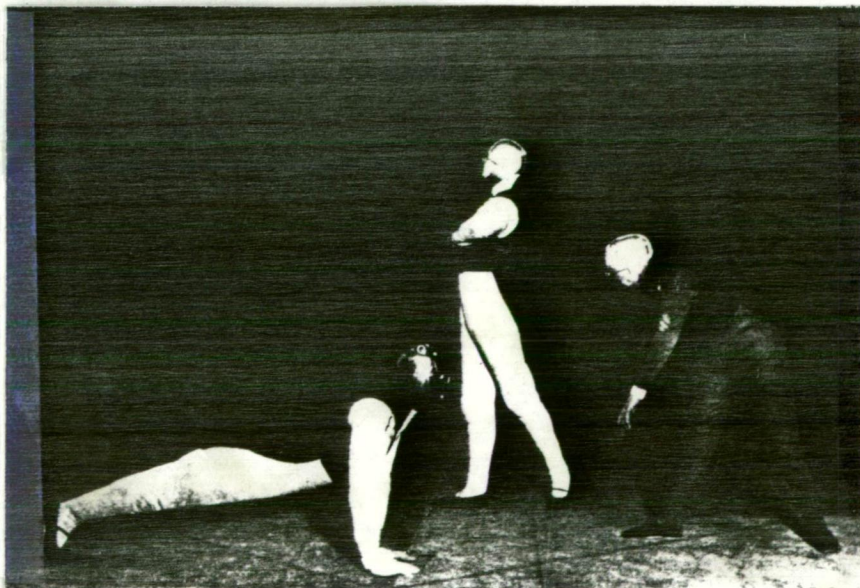
Drawing from Mensch und Kunstfigur.

Bauhaus book No. 4. 1925

Schlemmer was preoccupied with different manifestations of space

"the graphic representations of the dancers path were for him the theory of space, while performance in real space provided the practise to that theory."²³

In Gesture Dance 1926-27 (or Dance of Gestures)



Oskar Schlemmer

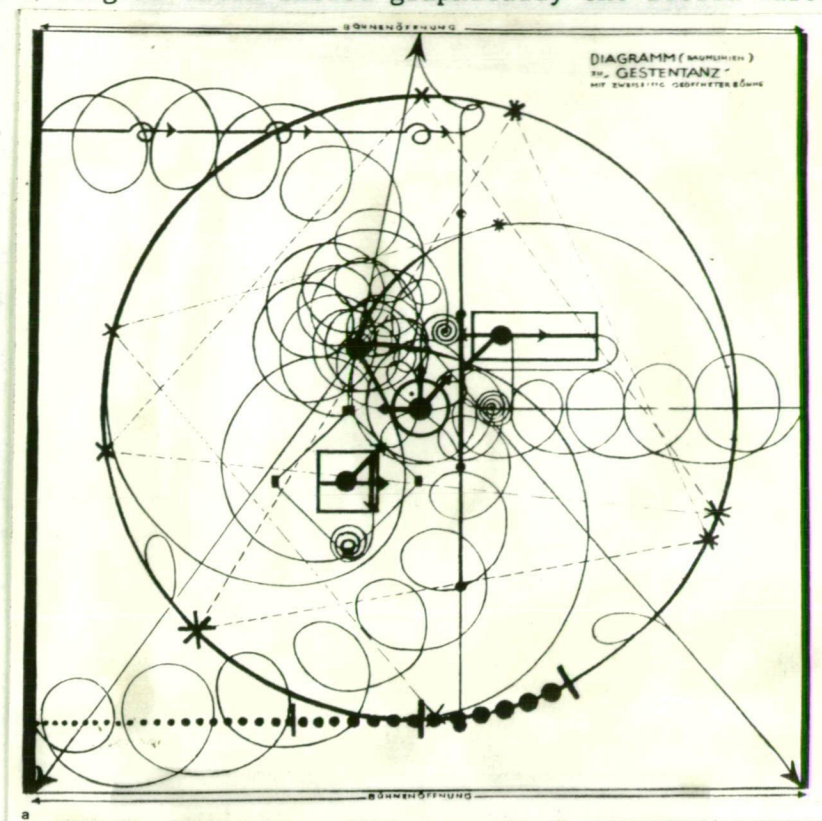
'Gesture Dance'

1926-27.

22. The Bauhaus. Hans M. Wingler. P. 118.

23. Performance: The Art of Notation. P. 55.

he used a diagram which showed graphically the action through space.



Oskar Schlemmer diagram for Gesture Dance 1926-27.

The second diagram used for Gesture Dance describes the dance in words.

[illegible]

Oskar Schlemmer

Notation for Gesture Dance

1926-27

Lucinda Childs was a performer during the sixties who used a form of notation in her pieces. In her earlier work she experimented with movement activity in relation to objects. She then altered and extended these events in time and space.



Lucinda Childs Pastime 1963

"Later on she felt it necessary to impose a structure on the piece other than the intuitive logic derived from movement exploration with objects. I created dialogues for this purpose which had ongoing reference to specific subject matter. The dialogues did not in and of themselves dictate action, but accompanied action as the activity in the dance drifted in and out of a context that was relevant to the content of the dialogue."²⁴

24. Lucinda Childs: A Portfolio. Art Forum. Feb. 1973. P. 50.

For example her performance Street Dance 1964.



Lucinda Childs, location for *Street Dance*, 1973. (Photo: Sidney Phillips.)

Street Dance, 1964

(at Robert Rauschenberg's studio, fall, 1965, dialogue on tape)

To see this dance the observer must stand by the window at the South end of the loft and look across the street toward the South side of Broadway onto the sidewalk extending between 11th and 12th Streets.

I am concerned with the area between the Bon Vivant Delicacie Store and Surplus Materials of Norbert and Hausknect. I am not concerned with either of these buildings specifically but I am concerned with the area between.

Old Europe Antiques Incorporated—a black sign with white letters is framed in gold—the window below the sign displays various objects, presumably European: clocks, chandeliers, candelabras, various antiques labeled with white tags — B 103 — Fa VR another 64 another 20. The remaining tags remain overturned or blank or no information is on them. On the door a small sign informs that the building is license bonded by New York State protected by a Mr. Louis Lewis, L-O-U-I-S L-E-V-I-S. There is a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any person committing burglary or larceny against this concern and to call ALgonquin 4-5952.

Next to the antique store is a stairway concealed by a grating. The stairway is closed on Saturdays by a padlock which attaches to the center of the grating; to the right of the grating is 816 Broadway, a Flea Market. A white sign is numbered 8 1 6 in black. The numbers 8 1 6 are written vertically and surrounded by a fine black ellipse. Four miniature cameras are displayed in the window, one for \$15.00, another

Street Dance: Score Minutes/Seconds

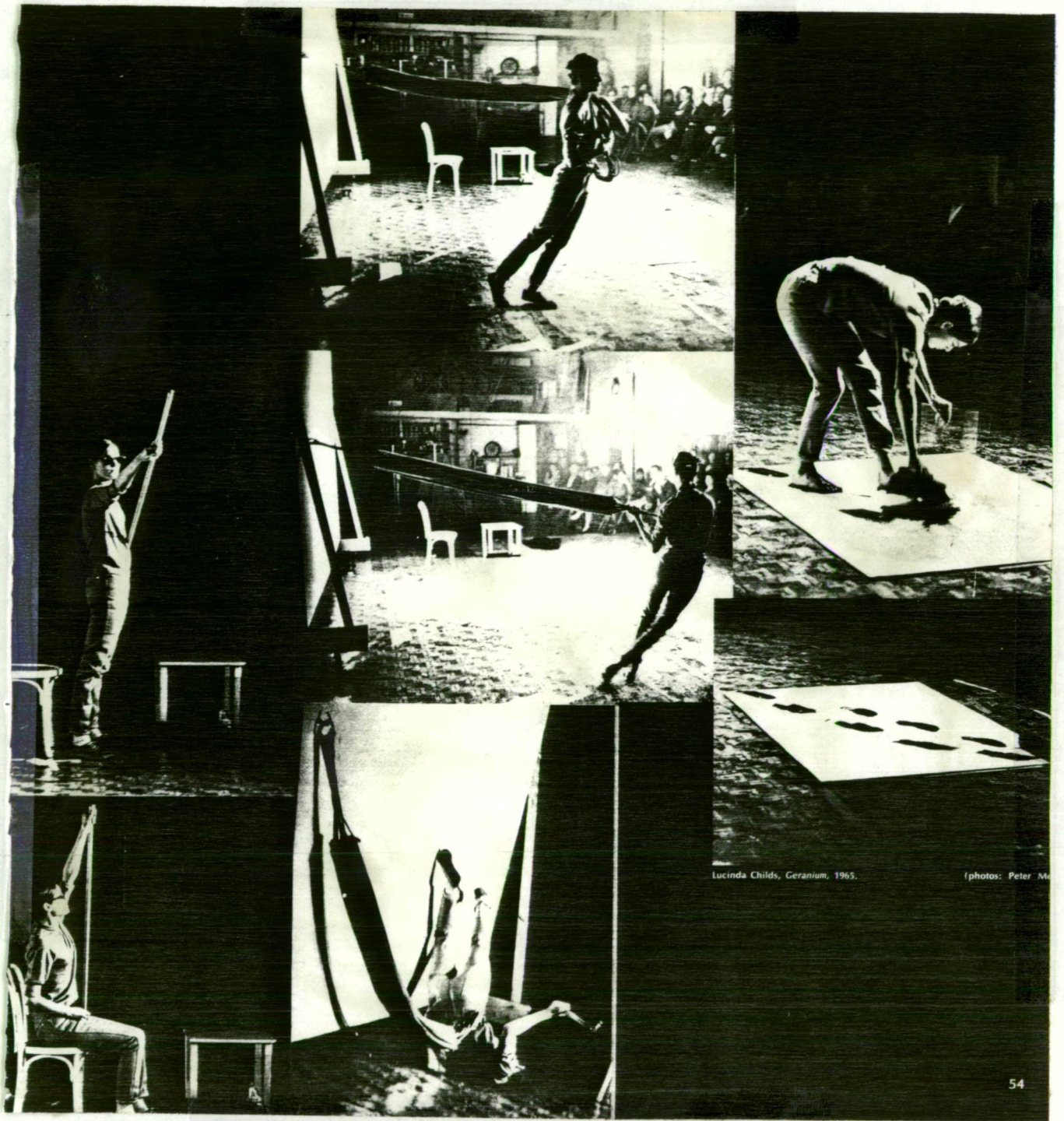
:50	Old Europe antiques
1:05	Window
1:25	B 103
1:45	End of tags
1:50	Door-license
2:10	Burglary, larceny
2:22	Grating
2:30	Padlock
2:35	Flea Market
2:54	8
2:55	1
2:56	6
3:10	Cameras
3:20	Dolls
3:22	Face each other
3:30	
3:35	(Action of performers)
3:42	Gurbob
3:50	Fire escape
3:55	(Action of performers)
4:05	Caltpe
4:10	Y of Caltpe
4:20	(Action of performers)
4:30	Repeated below
4:35	C of Caltpe
	cardboard boxes
5:08	Typewriters etc. written in a vertical column
5:09	(Action of performers)
5:10	
5:15	
5:25	Aluminum column
5:50	Snow street
6:00	Arch

\$10.00. On the left wall in the window two carved wooden owls face each other. The owls are from Spain. A white sign with red lettering beneath the window square explains that the nonautomatic sprinkler is in the basement.

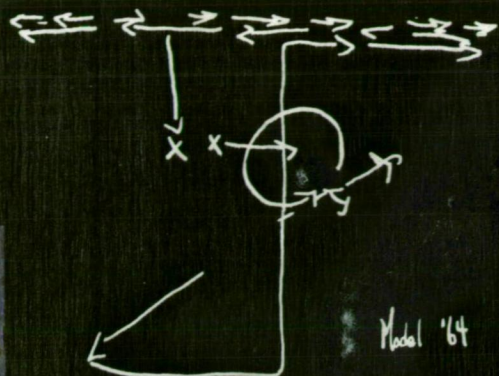
814 Broadway is a Gurbob building — the numbers are in white against the maroon color of the building. A steel ladder extending from underneath the fire escape to the right intersects with the letters. Next to that Caltpe Wholesale Office Machines — a white sign with black lettering. The Y of Caltpe extends downward to the line of the black squarish ellipse that surrounds the sign, the round ball at the bottom tip of the Y is cut in half by the bottom line of the ellipse. The sign is repeated below in the window, however in this instance the C of Caltpe is surrounded by orange. There are three rows of cardboard boxes to the right in the window. A red arrow extends upward on each one and the word "up" is written to the left of each red arrow in red. To the left of this, typewriters, adding machines, calculators, photocopy, mimeograph, and dictation machines are advertised in gold writing in a vertical column. A square pillar extends in front of the second of three doorways of 814 Broadway. The building is sprinkled at 814 Broadway, with the exception of the cellar and subcellar which is sprinkled at 812 Broadway, also a Gurbob building.

This is a snow street—no parking 8 am-6 pm Monday through Friday. There is a broken arch on the roof of the Caltpe building and an identical broken arch at the right, but it does not extend as much into the lower fringe embordment of the building.

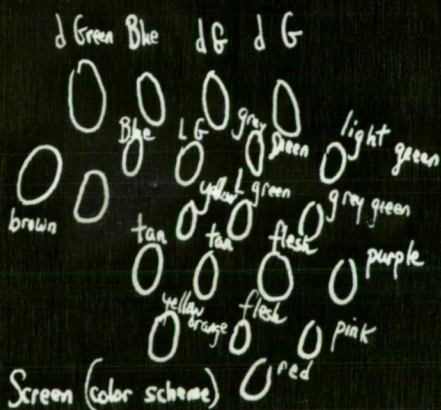
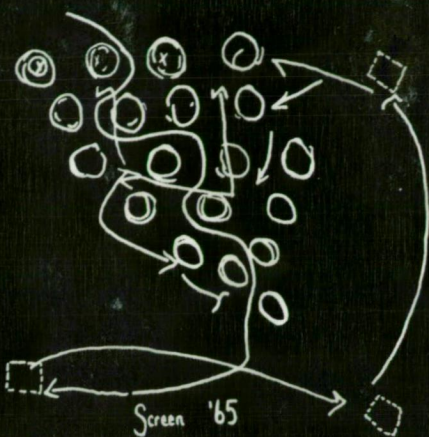
This was performed on the city street within an area visible from the sixth floor window of Rauschenberg's loft. A group of spectators looked down while the dialogue on the tape was left with them. These examples of notation are accompanied by a descriptive score which tells you what the dance is about as well as the movements involved.



Lucinda Childs. Geranium 1965. (Photos: Peter Moore)



Model '64



Model, August, 1964, dialogue

This is a typical Modern Dance position.
It is based on this idea...
You can use it.
There are ways to use it.
You can abandon it...
Of course there are other positions.

This is a typical Modern Dance position.
It is uncomfortable to be in as well as difficult to
get out of and ugly.
The right foot is bent diagonally back toward the
right and the left leg is bent diagonally back toward
the left.
It is an expressive position.
Expressive for someone who has nothing to do.
Of course Yogis can get down on the floor like this
Put one foot like this and the other...

Screen, February, 1965, dialogue.
while laying down the dots.

The technique demonstrated here is derived from an
offshoot of a branch of French Impressionism in
which the luminosity is produced by laying on the
color in points or small dots of unmixed color which
are blended by the eye in the silhouetted form of the
landscape or other subject matter to capture intention-
ally a particular aspect of a part of a time of the
day or part of the time of the day or simply the time
of the day.

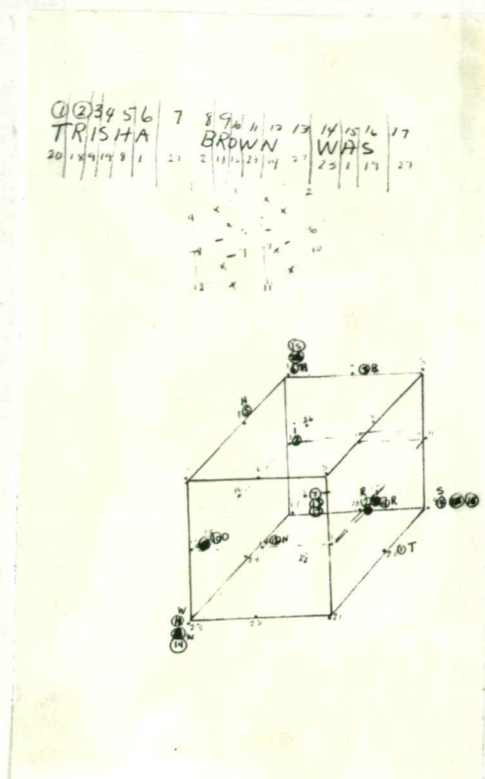
before entering from behind

I think that I am in a position where I can truthfully
say that everything I have put down is behind me
with the exception of this mirror which I am holding
in my left hand. The human biology is essentially
equipped to enter things in front of itself and is
relatively incapable of entering things from behind
without the use of rear vision which is the reason for
which I am using this mirror as I enter this body of
material — and the reason why I am entering in this
backward manner is I suppose that I wanted to get a
new angle on this material in as much as a reporter
would return to the scene of a crime to reinvestigate
the facts — or perhaps speak to someone he hadn't
spoken to before to get a new angle on the situation.
However the only angle that I have found here is not
new — it is created by a line extending from that point
at which my eye hits the mirror to a point on the
floor which I see in the mirror. This is a diagonal line.
I'm sorry that I don't have a string to demonstrate it
more clearly, all I can safely say about this angle is
that it is probably more than 45° and inevitably less
than 90°. Also in the painting from which these colors
are derived most of the figures are spectators and con-
siderably fewer figures are performing various acro-
batic stunts involving precarious balance. One of the
players is in this position... Here it is again...
and once more....

LUCINDA CHILDS.

Trisha Brown in her pieces after the 'equipment dances' began using
different forms of notation. For example Locus 1975 is a piece
where she began working with 3 forms of notation. "Firstly, she
drew a cube, numbered it and made a sequence of numbers based on

biological information. She studied the numbers, then matched them with the drawing, then returned to the number score and back to the drawing. Following this procedure she invented movements which would allow her to move from one number to the next.



Trisha Brown

Notation used

for Locus 1975

Part two was for the four dancers involved. She expanded the initial drawing with explanatory notes. Sometimes she added stick figures but the drawing were always a reminder for the work, they were not a representation.

"Pursuing the idea of notation she developed part three of her system. Taking a section of the original dance, she wrote it out, gave the written text to a dancer who was not familiar with that piece, but who had a general idea of the style of her work. In this way she wished to arrive at natural variations – the erosion of the piece, something that impinges on the original and courses it to change."²⁶

26. "Performance the Art of Notation" Roselee Goldberg. P. 57,



Trisha Brown Locus 1975

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Art Forum. Jan. 1974.

THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN;

"Looking at the question of looking at women"

"In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Women displayed as sexual object is the leit-motif of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley, she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire."

This quote by Laura Mulvey is relevant in both art and culture: from advertisements to traditional representations of women in art. The patriarchal society in which we live encourages this sexual split by saturating us with images, showing us "that those in power, with power, and men in general use many aspects of non verbal communication to maintain both capitalism and male privilege."² The attitudes of the time are reflected in the representations of women as well as the attitudes of the artists or creators of the image. For example, Renoir continually painted his vision or fantasy of the ideal woman. Yet as he aged, his attitude toward representing women changed. His earlier paintings were scenes of enchantment, gay young and voluptuous nudes usually portrayed in natural settings. These carefree young girls were there for the purpose of pleasure for men. But, later during the 1900's he became increasingly conservative in his outlook, writing against modernity, industrialization and the increase of feminism. "He believed that men should be thinkers, artists and intellectuals, while women should be sources of pleasure for men in sex, in mothering, in homemaking."³ His carefree girls were replaced by mature peasants, represented in various maternal roles. Advertisements today to some extent still hold onto these values, throwing them back onto us as reflection of our society. For example a perfume advertisement in a Mode Australia magazine shows us a business woman who is holding her own with her male associates in the top image and yet as the text says "But up close it is something else" referring to the bottom image. The ad is obviously meant to reach the liberated modern woman who is the likely reader of the magazine, reinforcing a particular behaviour while acknowledging woman's changing role in the workforce.

Slide
1

1. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Laura Mulvey, Screen Vol. 16, 3, 1975. P. 11.
2. "Body Politics: Some Notes on the Stealing and Selling of Non-Verbal Communication: Peter Steven, Film Reader 5 p.205.
3. "Renoir's Sensuous Women" Barbara Ehrlich White, Woman as Sex Object by Hess and Nochlin, P. 169.

The to-be-looked-at-ness that Laura Mulvey talks about is one of the most active forces in much of the representation of women. Within this context the comment by John Berger seems valid: 'men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at.'⁴

The depiction of the nude in the history of European painting shows this in, for example, Ingres: The Large Odalisque 1814 (Odalisque is a Turkish word meaning a harem slave girl). The nude's head is turned to face outwards and is staring at the viewer. She is aware of being looked at. Another example is the Biblical subject of Susannah and the Elders which was painted often by different artists. The theme of Susannah and the Elders is that the two elders who are hidden in the garden have threatened Susannah that they will publicly accuse her of committing adultery with a young man if she will not yield to them. A comparison can be made between Rembrandt's Susanna Surprised by the Elders 1647, where Susanna is looking at the viewer and trying to cover her nakedness, and Tintoretto's version where Susannah is aware of the elders spying on her as well as the viewer. She is objectified by allowing herself to be viewed as well as viewing herself in a mirror. In another version by Tintoretto, Susannah looks straight unashamedly at the viewer.

This very popular theme of women at their toilet has gone through some remarkable changes. Themes from classical and Biblical stories, for example, painted originally within this context, change to being painted purely for their erotic impact; The theme of Bathsheba, is an example, where a maid or maids are preparing her for the seduction of King David in the painting of Rembrandts, The Toilet of Bathsheba 1643. The nude is aware of the viewer and is looking straight out of the painting. This theme of maids preparing mistresses slowly lost its Biblical meaning by the eighteenth century and became a type of representation; by this I mean that anonymous mistresses and maids became genre and the representation became its own intimate and erotic meaning.

Many of the Biblical and Classical stories allowed justification for the representation of nudes. The Judgement of Paris is such a story. discord (who is in the clouds) is spreading fire and pestilence around. He threw an apple amongst the guests at the nuptials of Thetis and Pelleus. Paris was ordered by Jupiter to award it to the most beautiful of the competitors; Juno, Minerva and Venus. The three goddesses offered him bribes. Venus was awarded the golden apple.

4. Ways of Seeking Chp. 3. John Berger. P. 47.

Over a period of time the meaning of the painting lost importance. In later portrayals the intention of the painting was to show a seductive line-up of flesh where the viewer becomes the judge. The original story was lost, leaving only the title and a vague story similar to that of a beauty quest.

- 7 Three examples ranging from the fiteenth century to the ninteenth century
8 show this shift in the importance of meaning.

Judgement of Paris by Cranach 1529.

Judgement of Paris : Rubens 1635-37

Judgement of Paris : Renoir C1914.

The idea of women naked, before the eyes of the judge, poses another question about the representation of women. The majority of images which are made for the enjoyment of the male viewers are young and beautiful women and girls of no particular identity other than youth and beauty. Representation of a married woman or a mother is not considered to be erotic "Once married and a mother she disappeared from consideration.....The implications seem to be that a womans erotic power was extinguished by its very fulfilment." ⁵ However this is not always so, as in the later nudes and genre scenes of Renoir where he portrays motherhood in an erotic and sensual manner. For example, his painting Maternity 1918 "the relaxed and knowing smiles by which these women so often relate to the viewer suggest that their power could be directed to that viewer (not only at the child they maybe holding) and that its basis is erotic as well as nurturing." ⁶

- The advertisements of today rely heavily on selling a particular commodity by the use of this look, that is, using a beautiful and young woman who implies she is offering more to the viewer than the commodity. "At the risk of sounding too speculative I would contend that that which recuperates a bottle of cherry or a car in advertisements from being read as still life with its traditional
9 associations and indicates their status as purchaseable commodities, is the presence of a woman by virtue of that which the woman introduces into an image." ⁷

Women are therefore seen as a sign of exchange or sale. This point is taken up and discussed later in the essay.

5. "The Femme Fatale and her Sisters" : Martha Kingsbury, P. 195

6. "Woman as Sex Object", Hess and Kingsbury P. 203 Nochlin.

7. "Whats Wrong with Images of Women?" : Griselda Pollock,
Screen Education No. 24 1977 Autumn. P. 28.

One point in discussing the representation of women is the lack of identity, the objectification, the universality of type. As I mentioned earlier, not only is the representation of women determined by the artists desires and sexuality, but by the moral and social changes of the period. During the eighteenth century women were represented in a passive role while the male viewer in the picture or of the picture is embodying the power "A mans presence suggests what he is capable of doing to you or for you. By contrast, a womans presence expresses her own attitude to herself, and defines what can and cannot be done to her." ⁸

In the late nineteenth century the male/female relationship became the problem of human sexuality. The art and literature during this time shows the preoccupation with the character of love and nature of sexual desire. The femme fatale makes its appearance during this time where "A deep-rooted misogyny had been common amongst many artists since the beginning of the century. The belief was wide spread that women capped creativity and that they were incapable of elevating feelings or of understanding art." ⁹ The belief expressed in the quote above is also echoed in the writings of Renoir, who is not really a painter of the femme fatale. "I consider that women are monsters who are authors, lawyers and politicians, like George Sand, Madame Adam, and other bores who are nothing more than five legged beasts. The woman who is an artist is merely ridiculous, but I feel that it is acceptable for a woman to be a singer or a dancer. In Antiquity and amongst simple people, women sing and dance and they do not therefore become less feminine. Gracefulness is a woman's domain and even her duty. I know very well that today things have become worse, but what can we do? In former times, women freely sang and danced in order to be winsome and pleasing to men. Today they must be paid off; the charm is gone." ¹⁰

These 19th century artists drew their subjects from many sources, particularly the Bible. Three particular stories held fascination for them because of the fate of the victims. The first story is about Judith, the Jewish widow who decapitated the Philistine general Holofernes after making love to him. The second story is about Salome, who demanded the head of John the Baptist as a reward for dancing before Herod. The third is about Delilah, who cut off Sampson's hair which was his strength, then betrayed him to his enemies who put out his eyes.

8. John Berger. P. 45-46.

9. Femme Fatale; Images of Evil and Facinating Women: Patrick Bade P. 6.

10. Barbara Ehrlich White. P. 170.

Representing women during this time as tainted and evil, devouring the persecuted male, is perhaps a result of the society in the nineteenth century. Syphilis was rampant and incurable, carried and spread widely by prostitution. Prostitution was the profession most widely practised by women, because views of domesticity had forced women out of the work place.

Many artists of the time were against the rules of bourgeois morality and thus were susceptible to the infection which in fact did kill artists such as Manet and Gauguin. Women did become a threat of disease and death. (However, the same could have been said for the men as well). High class prostitution, although having a long history before the nineteenth century, did during this time reach notoriety with real femmes fatales such as Cora Pearl, whose reputations were based on their ruination of men. Cora Pearl apparently had an instinctive horror of men. Perhaps this 'horror' is due to the necessity of a job in prostitution and society's double standards concerning this profession.

10. Dante Passette is an example of an artist obsessed with beautiful women. Although not all his women are fatale, (the earlier works are of the Romantic heroine type) he created the type of beauty of the femme fatale depicted throughout its time: a prototype. They are always depicted with a mane of hair "her most effective and lethal weapon", erect posture, thrown back head and heavy eyelids. For example Astarte Syriaca 1877 by Rossetti. This painting of Jane Morris, whom he used as a model a great deal, shows his obsession with women's hair. Later, his women showed a more masculine line, particularly the chin, neck and shoulders, while the breasts, waists and hips were hidden. This particular masculine line for women was also echoed in the fashion of the time, where it "created an impression of Amazonian vigour and power." Abundant hair was piled up on top of the head and crowned with exaggerated and elaborate head gear, often adorned with dead birds and fruit and hung with veils. Enormously puffed up sleeves, sometimes as wide as the torso itself, broadened the upper part of the body and accentuated the shoulders. Narrow skirts increased this emphasis and allowed more mobility than women had enjoyed in the constricting crinolines of the mid-century. Breasts were moulded by stays and padding into a pigeon-chested form with no suggestion of feminine pliancy. Voluminous snake-like feather boas added still further to the effect of awesome amplitude." This poses the question about the oppression of women's sexuality by the restrictions of fashion.

11. The Femme Fatale: Images of Evil and Fascinating Women: Patrick Bade. P. 30

One particular theme running through the femme fatale period is that of their relationship to animals, and a kinship or secret understanding between them is implied. Many ancient Greek stories dealing with the idea were very popular, such as mermaids, sirens and Medusa. The sphinx took on a new lease of life; for example The Caress by Ferrand Khropff, 1896, and to the sphinx was added other half animal and half woman creatures; "these creatures were representations of the base or animal side of women, rather as the centaur and the satyr were of man in classical art. Most animals used in these transplants were chosen for their repulsive and predatory characteristics - qualities which were also attributed to women."¹²

The taking up and re-working of the femme fatale in western society was very effective in areas of fashion and art. It was also fused into the cultural scene of dancers, singers and actresses; for example the novelist, Colette and the dancer Ida Rubenstein adopted sphinx-like poses for pin-up pictures of the early nineteenth century. Actresses were also influenced by the femme fatale type. Sarah Bernhardt's image as a femme fatale was carefully cultivated in real life, "her scandalous love affairs, the Byzantine luxuriousness of her surroundings, her ever attendant menagerie of wild beasts, the famous satin lined coffin in which she was reputed to sleep, her interest in executions (she attended a hanging in London, a garroting in Madrid, and two beheadings in Paris), and her necklace of petrified human eyes".¹³ The femme fatale image was also influential in the movies of the nineteen twenties, with actresses such as Theda Bara who was America's film industries first 'Vamp'. She acted in films such as The Devils Daughter, Sin, The Galley Slave, The Serpent, The Vixen, The Tiger Woman, The Rose of Blood, Cleopatra, Salome, The She Devil, The Sirens Song and many more with the same type of theme. Her influence was enormous, and she prepared the way for many actresses to come, such as Hedy Lamar, Jean Harlow, Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. The Art Nouveau Style of the time took in the femme fatale imagery - particularly Sarah Bernhardt, with open arms. The feather boas, long flowing hair, half-closed eyelids and the other symbols such as snakes, became popular in household objects such as lamps and vases and as ornaments to be worn by women.

Perhaps the obvious anxieties expressed by these artists about their

12. Femme Fatale: Images of Evil and Fascinating Women: Patrick Bade P. 8

13. Patrick Bade. P. 36

own sexuality and fears of the opposite sex have resulted from the increase of consciousness by women at the time. Although the Womens Movement was in existence it had not yet become motivated, women were making an appearance and becoming more articulate. "The last decade of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of women as political and professional competitors with men, a change which opened earlier standards of female subjugation and dependency to examination." ¹⁴

The introduction of photography in the nineteenth century is important in the history of representation of women. Photographing nude women was originally a means of getting an image from which a painting was made. These photographs soon became erotic and of value by themselves. They perhaps became popular because they depict real women; "the erotic imagination was especially stimulated by the thought that the photographs were posed by an actual woman and not the purely fanciful figure of an erotic drawing." ¹⁵ The introduction of these erotic photographs was not altogether welcomed, Disderi in eighteen sixty two said "those sad nudities which display a desperate truth about all the physical and moral ugliness of the models paid by the session that unwholesome industry which occupies the courts of law." ¹⁶

- 18 Many of the traditional trappings of 19th century salon paintings were used in the erotic photographs. By copying Salon paintings, which were an acceptable and respectable form of art, the erotic photograph was attempting to gain respectability in a society which moralized against such imagery.

- For example the poses of the model were similar, the use of exotic settings, however, the nude always looked out of place. "A piquancy was given by the contrast between suggested luxuriousness of the setting and the every-
- 19 day reality of the model, usually from the lower ranks of prostitution." ¹⁷ A comparison between Titian's painting of Venus of Urbino sixteenth
- 20 century and Eugene Durieux' photograph of the nineteenth century shows this better. The two are different representations of a reclining nude in an exotic setting, and the difference is the reality of the nude in the photograph. However, not only is the tradition of high art an influence on the erotic photograph but it is suggested by Gerald Needham in Woman as Sex Object that the pornographic photograph

14. "The Iconography of Symbolist Painting" Robert Pincus - written. Art Forum. Oct. 1970 P. 60

15. "Manet, Olympia and Pornographic Photography: Gerald Needham, Women as Sex Object. P. 22

16. Views on Nudes. Bill Jay.

17. Gerlad Needham. P. 82.

was also an influence on the paintings of the time, and the example was

21 Olympia 1863 by Manet. The painting is done in the realist tradition, but the face and defiant posture of the nude resembles that of the pornographic photograph. She doesn't passively offer up her charms for the viewer, her stare at the viewer is one of challenge and self-possession. The painting was also a challenge to the society at the time and caused quite a scandal. Jules Claretie wrote about the painting in the L'Artiste. "What is this Odalisque with the yellow stomach? A base model, picked up I don't know where who represents Olympia. Olympia? What Olympia? A courtesan no doubt? Manet cannot be accused of idealizing the foolish virgins, he who makes them vulgar virgins...." ¹⁸

This particular look is echoed in much of the twentieth century mass market images of women. The eroticism of particular types in girly magazines owe their popularity to the erotic language of past traditions. The nineteenth century femme fatale look was of erotic value during its time. Today that look is used to connote eroticism; we draw on the visual vocabulary of past traditions. This quote by Irma Kutz in Nova Magazine nineteen seventy needs to be questioned as to why "No matter how admired a woman is for her success, her personality, even her sexuality, at one time or another in her life she longs to be worshipped as an object: a beautiful, soulless, mindless object enduring neither warmth nor compassion." ¹⁹ Is this desire to be objectified a result of centuries of being treated as such and by being told this is the difference between men and women? The ideal of what is beautiful and how women should be has always been placed upon women by mass culture and art tradition perhaps to the point where women see through male eyes. As John Berger points out "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determine not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object - and most particularly an object of vision: a sight." ²⁰ Even today the exploitation of female sexuality in advertising and soft pornography which Lisa Tickner attributes to the greater social freedom for women has added to this attitude. "Women's bodies are used to sell to men and women who are thereby encouraged to collude in their own reification, and to identify with the characteristics of exhibitionism and narcissism Through advertising and newspaper photographs the glamorized nude becomes accepted by both sexes as part of the natural language of the media." ²¹ Examples of this can be seen in advertising

22 in women's magazines, particularly underwear advertisements which are so explicit as images in Playboy and Penthouse. "They play and prey on women's

18. Impressionists and Impressionism: M. & G. Blunden, P. 57. Macmillan London Ltd.

19. Views of Nudes: Bill Jay

20. John Berger. P. 47

21. "The Body Politic: Female Sexuality & Women Artists" since 1970. Lisa Tickner. Art History Vol. 1 No. 2 June 1978 P. 238.

narcissism, their vague envies, their endless dissatisfaction with their bodies, their
23 Cinderella dreams."²² The three images I have used show this comparison,
two images are from Womens Weekly, underwear advertisements and the
24 third of a pin-up in Playboy.

Playboy relies on voyeurism; the women are portrayed as sex objects
always in a stylized pose and setting. Heffner's flesh machine has
computed the three perfect poses to display his goods. They are shot
indoors and out, in contemporary bedrooms and alongside swimming pool
decks. What was good for Ingres is good enough for Playboy, and the
eg. 24 traditional reclining pose appears in every issue. The second favourite
25 is Miss Month kneeling only with her hands behind her head, arms fanned
out, or strained at her sides. Playmates rarely appear fully clothed
or totally undressed.

(I have not elaborated on this point here as I will discuss it later
in my essay.)

26 The third pose is archetypal, a pensive dungaree doll caught mid-strip
unzipped jeans loosely around hips, standing with a look of pleased
helplessness. The facial expression is the same for all: "Oh Darling,
you surprised me... but stay since your here."²³ Obviously Playboy is not
striving for reality but for a "synthetic, remoulded, transformed, stylized,
idealized, sex object. A nude is merely the basic ingredient."²⁴ In Playboy
and similar magazines all the ugly aspects are deleted, freckles,
scars, wrinkles, skin flaws and birthmarks are covered over with
body makeup. The camera angles and type of lens used hide any body
disproportions. Oil is used to highlight the skin, breasts must be
as large as possible and erect, and the pose used must tense muscles.
"Hardly reality but a contrived attempt to reach the editors opinion of the average
readers dream of the perfect woman."²⁵

One point raised in the quotes on Playboy is the eroticism of images
of women in various states of dressing and undressing. From the
traditions of art to popular culture, this form of titillation is
present. These practices have led to the use of particular objects
of femininity as symbols: a language of eroticism. For example
stockings, which even today have far more sexual connotations than
its more practical replacement of pantihose, and are still sold on
the market. The depictions of pin-ups, naked, except for their stockings

22. The Nude Male: M. Walters

23. Views on Nudes: Bill Jay

24. Bill Jay.

25. Bill Jay.

and shoes, or in various stages of dress, is obviously more erotic than being totally naked. Why then is a partially clothed woman more erotic to the male than a totally nude woman? The question can be asked of fashion magazines as well as girlie magazines. Perhaps the quote by R. Barthes used in Mick Carter's article "The Strip Laid Bare Unevenly" sheds some light on the subject. "Is not the most erotic portion of the body where the garment gapes?it is intermittence which is erotic, the intermittence of skin flashing between two edges (open-necked shirt, the glove and the sleeve); it is the flash itself which seduces, or rather the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance." ²⁶ Therefore the hint of cleavage in a fashion advertisement or the strip of flesh at the top of stockings in a girlie magazine connote the same sign or language. Mick Carter goes on to say "the erotic charge derives from a state in which access and denial are fused into a single process." ²⁷ This device of obscuring and directing the viewer's gaze has been used, from early representations of women to contemporary ones.

The images of David Hamilton are an example of this. He uses obscuring devices such as soft focus and lace sets, which require the viewer to peer in. Fashion advertising in women's magazines also use similar methods. The example I have used is an advertisement of face makeup where tulle is used to cover the face.

The symbol of the stocking and suspender belt has its beginnings in the traditional art. For example Woman in White Stockings 1861 painted by Gustave Courbet portrays a peasant, cross-legged, putting on her stockings. The pose itself leaves no doubt that Courbet is painting a prostitute. During this time the stockings were a symbol of 'low-down lust and sin' when on a naked woman. The stocking theme is also reflected in the pastels by Degas and are used in works by twentieth century artists like Allen Jones, and in girlie magazines of today. The woman becomes an object of fetishism "Fetishism, Freud first pointed out, involves displacing the sight of woman's imaginary castration on to a variety of reassuring but often surprising objects - shoes, corsets, rubber goods, belts, knickers, etc. - which serve as signs for the lost penis but have no direct connection with it. For the fetishist, the sign itself is the subject of his fantasy...." ²⁸

26. "The Strip Laid Bare: Unevenly" Mick Carter, Art and Text Writer 1983. P. 54

27. Mick Carter. P. 55

28. "You Don't Know What is Happening Do You, Mr. Jones?" Laura Mulvey P. 53. Spare Rib Reader.

The women in many of Alan Jone's sculptures and paintings are clad in spike heels, leather bound by belts, gloves and whips. "The most effective fetish both constricts and uplifts, binds and raises, particularly high-heeled shoes, corsets or bras, and, as a trimming, high neckbands holding the head erect." ²⁹

Interestingly these particular garments have been an aspect of women's fashion which continually reappear.

The pinup is a good example of what I have been talking about. It is an image of a woman fetishised and objectified on whom the viewer who is male can project his fantasies without fear that the female will challenge his superiority. "Women then stands in patriarchal culture as signifies for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which the man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning." ³⁰ Not only does the woman signify male desire but also that of sale and commodity. "The female body is not only a sex object but also an object of exchange; its value can be sold (prostitution) or it can be incorporated into another commodity which then can be sold." ³¹ An example of this is the pin-up or even advertisements. The idea of woman signifying sale and commodity can be explained in a historical context.

The concept of marriage that is of man 'taking' a mate has changed a great deal over the centuries but it still has meaning as a form of ownership. Susan Brownmiller says "As the first permanent acquisition of man, his first piece of real property, woman was, in fact the original building block, the cornerstone of the 'house of the father'. Mans forcible extension of his boundaries of his mate and later to their off-spring was the beginning of his concept of ownership. Concepts of hierarchy, slavery and private property flowed from, and could only be predicated upon, the initial subjugation of woman." ³² The introduction of a father giving his daughter away in marriage implies ownership (of the father) and exchange of ownership (from the father to the husband). "Criminal rape as a patriarchal father saw it, was a violation of the new way of doing business. It was, in a phrase, the theft of virginity, an embezzlement of his daughters fair price on the market." ³³ This early form of social order and behaviour over-shadows aspects of our society today, reinforced by

29. Laura Mulvey. P. 51

30. "Gentlemen Consume Blanders" Maureen Turim. Wide Angle. P. 56

31. Laura Mulvey. P. 7

32. Against Our Will: Susan Brownmiller.

33. Susan Brownmiller.

such things as the Bible, which is the basis for our moral and social structure. However, the marriage vows have been altered in the past few years to allow more equality. For example, the exchange of vows used to be that the woman said 'I promise to love, honour, and obey him', while the male said 'I promise to love, honour, and cherish her'. The last two words from each vow have been deleted. The original vows imply that the male is the figure of authority within the marriage. The woman becomes a possession which he will look after as he does with all his belongings. The woman is an object or commodity which is sold or exchanged between the two men concerned, her new provider, husband and her old provider, father.

The idea of woman as sale and commodity is not new in our society, and in this sense, the use of woman in advertisements, is not exploited but just a continuation of the old ideology relying on well worn signifiers. Women have always been represented as to be looked at while men are the ones that look. An attempt to change this structure by reversal of roles is not the answer. "Struggling against their traditional passivity does not mean becoming an imitation of men: which is the assumption made by magazines like Play Girl, trying to sell nude pin-ups to women. Such magazines are trying to reduce a woman's feelings to a formula even before she knows what they really are." ³⁴ The reversing of roles, in male pin-ups, is assuming that that which is erotic to males, is erotic to females. The reversal doesn't work because of this. Woman as a pin-up signifies passivity, she is posed purely for the pleasure of the spectator. She is "frozen in two dimensions, uncomplaining, uncritical, incapable of jealousy." ³⁵ In

29 magazines where the pin-up is male (such as Play Girl) the male pin-up never gives come-hither looks or has openly seductive poses. He often appears absorbed in his own activities and thoughts. The idea of woman being the one looked at while the man looks is so strong in our visual vocabulary that a reversal of these structures doesn't work as such. "The female pin-up, by the very fact of her nudity, is available, 30 that she is turned on just because she is being photographed and admired. But (with the male pin-up) the woman must imagine attracting and arousing that self contained man, giving him an erection." ³⁶

The visual vocabulary of mass media also makes an attempt at reversing sex roles in advertisements, to create different meanings. For example,

34. The Nude Male: M. Walters. P.

35. M. Walters. P. 291.

36. M. Walters. P. 304.

- the man giving a woman a diamond ring has always been associated with
- 31 love. The man giving the woman a diamond ring (usually an engagement ring) also signifies that he has chosen her and in its traditional meaning, that she is now his. A woman wearing the ring, signifies to other suitors that she is taken. The reversal of this image where a woman gives a man a diamond does not, however show a reversal in meaning. The two advertisements for diamonds show this point. In the advertisement where he gives her a diamond we read all the traditional signs and it signifies a representation we have seen and expect to see.
- 32 The advertisement where she gives him a diamond ring we also read it in traditional representational ways. That is, he is still the dominant power and she is still in the passive role. The first advertisement reads where he has accepted her by giving her the ring. The second advertisement reads where he has also accepted her by accepting the ring from her. The use of the text supports this and encourages this reading.
- 33 Advertisements are such an important part of our lives, we cannot help but be confronted with them every day. We are told how we should look, what we should own, how we should behave, what we should do. In other words the roles we should play are bombarding us every day. "We feel a need to belong to have a social place; it can be hard to find. Instead we may be given an imaginary one. All of us have a genuine need for a social being, a common culture. The mass media provides this to some extent and can (potentially) fulfil a positive function in our lives."³⁷ However this is not always to the benefit of both sexes.

The representations of women and their roles in society are being questioned, but, before real changes can occur, ideologies need to change. The mass media is the vehicle for such a change. It not only gives the public what it wants to see, it also determines what the public will see and eventually respond to. Photography is one of the major instruments used in the media allowing accessibility to everyone. It is a very versatile medium and easily manipulated to present the required image such as the playboy image. It also has the ability to record reality as in the snap shot of someone's mother. Artists are using the medium to either give a realistic interpretation of women or as a medium to pointedly show the way woman are represented by images in magazines and advertisements.

37. Decoding Advertisements – Ideology and Meaning in Advertising.
Judith Williamson. P. 13.

The continuation of such works is a step toward changing attitudes. However, I feel that these images of woman will be viewed from a patriarchal male ideology. It will take a long time before the female body can be used by women to represent themselves and their desires.

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M. & G. Blunden

SLIDES IN ORDER

The slides catalogued here are situated in Vol. 2, marked with corresponding numbers.

1. Perfume Advertisement for Chimere, Prince Matchabelli
Vogue Australia. 1980's.
2. The Large Odalisque 1814. Jean-Dominique Ingres.
3. Susanna Surprised by the Elders 1647. Rembrant
4. Susanna and the Elders C1650. Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto.
5. The Toilet of Bathsheba 1643. Rembrant
6. The Judgement of Paris 1529. Lucas Cranach the elder.
7. The Judgement of Paris 1635-7. Rubens
8. The Judgement of Paris. C1914. Renoir
9. Wine Advertisement "What to have with Chicken" for Kaiser
Stuhl. Australian Playboy. November 1980.
10. Astarte Syriaca 1877. Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
11. The Caress. 1896. Fernand Khnopff.
12. Bat Woman. 1890. Albert Penot.
13. Photograph of Colette (novelist), Ida Rubinstein (dancer).
14. Photograph of Sarah Bernhardt sleeping in her coffin.
15. Photograph of Theda Bara as 'Salome', 'Cleopatra' and
'Madonna'.
16. Photograph of Marlene Dietrich.
17. Art Nouveau poster for Theatre performance starring Sarah
Bernhardt.
18. Post card 1850. Unknown photographer.
19. Venus of Urbino. 1538. Titian.
20. Photograph 1850 by Eugene Durieus.
21. Olympia 1863. Manet.
22. Underwear Advertisement for Berlei.
The Australian Womens Weekly. August 1923.

23. Underwear Advertisement for Simone Perele
The Australian Womens Weekly. 1983.
24. Photograph of Woman reclining.
Australian Playboy.
25. 'Pet of the Year' Miss Tracy Wallace
Australian Penthouse. 1981
26. Pin-up Australian Penthouse.
27. Make up Advertisement for Lancome, Paris.
28. Pin-up of Abigail. Australian Playboy. August 1980.
29. Male Pin-up - Paola Tomei from Calendar, May, Cleo.
30. Female Pin-up Australian Playboy.
31. Diamond Ring Advertisement - 'How to Make a Months Salary
last Forever'. for De Beers. The Australian Womans Weekly.
32. Diamond Ring Advertisement 'Your move' she said,'slipping
the diamond into my hand' for De Beers. Cleo. October 1983.
33. Underwear Advertisement for Jockey International.

SLIDES OF PIECES IN THE EXHIBITION

The slides catalogued here are situated in Vol. 2, marked with corresponding numbers.

<u>Title of Pieces</u>	<u>Slide Number</u>
* <u>'Port Arthur'</u> size=60.5x102 cm (frame) 6 infa red images framed together	34
* <u>Down Stairs</u> size=28.5x40.5 cm (each frame) 4 infa-red images separately framed	35
* <u>Body and Frame Piece</u> size=111x93cm (frame) Panel of 20 b/w images framed on red felt	36
* <u>Plastic Piece 11</u> size 61x105.5 cm (frame) steel frame, suspended photographs sewn in plastic	37
* <u>Plastic Piece 1</u> size=91.5x91.5 cm (frame) steel frame, suspended Photographs sewn in plastic	38
* <u>Untitled</u> size 41x99.5 (frame) 3 images on red felt framed together	39
* <u>Untitled</u> size 41x99.5 (frame) 3 images on red felt framed together	40
* <u>Untitled</u> size 41x41 cm (each frame) 3 images on red felt framed separately	41

<u>Title of Pieces</u>	<u>Slide Number</u>
* <u>Portrait Piece 1</u> size 84.5x45 cm (each frame) 3 pieces steel rod frames, red felt and b/w photographs	42
* <u>Portrait Piece 11</u> size 40.6x40.6 (each photograph) 9 b/w images in plastic pockets	43
* <u>Like Mother like Daughter</u> size 3 images on white felt steel rod frame	44
* <u>Road Piece 11</u> size 67x72 (each frame) 4 pieces steel rod frames with white felt suspended sewn photographs	45
* <u>Road Piece 1</u> size 30.5x30.5cm (each photograph) 33 b/w photographs in plastic pockets	46
* <u>Puppet Pieces</u> size 87x111 (each frame) 2 pieces steel rod frames with fabric, photographs and paint.	47
* <u>Meat Piece</u> size 28.5x28.5 (each photograph) 2 rows of 6 images double sided 24 colour images suspended from 2 rods	48
* <u>Untitled</u> size 41x41 (each photograph) b/w photographs in plastic pockets	49

Title of Pieces

Slide Number

- | | | |
|---|--|---------|
| * | ' <u>Star Piece</u> ' size 160.5x118.5 (total piece)
2 pieces
steel rod frames with suspended
photographs and calico dolls
sewn in plastic | 50 |
| * | instilation shots | 51 - 56 |